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## Role perceptions of elected and appointed school board members and their superintendents in Virginia

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ROLE PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED  
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR  
SUPERINTENDENTS IN VIRGINIA

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Karen Lynn Peterson Kolet

December, 1997

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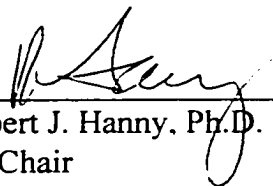
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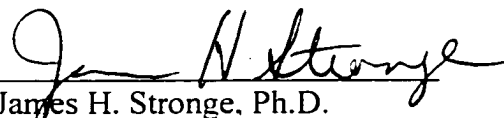
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ROLE PERCEPTION OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED  
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated role perceptions of elected and appointed school board members in Virginia. Four areas of policy issues provided the context for revealing role perceptions. The four issue areas, Administration and Organization, Business and Financial Management, Employee and Pupil Personnel Services, and Curriculum and Instruction, were included in a 27-item survey which was sent to 64 superintendents and their board members. Eighty-four percent of the sampled superintendent population and 61% of the sampled school board membership responded. Four null hypotheses were formulated to test for the differences in perceptions of roles of board members and superintendents. Confirming interviews were held with six superintendents and six school board members.

Significant statistical differences were found in two of the policy issue areas: Administration and Organization and Curriculum and Instruction. For Administration and Organization, differences were found between elected and appointed school board members and between superintendents of elected and appointed boards. Differences were also found between elected boards and their superintendents and appointed boards and their superintendents. For Curriculum and Instruction, statistically significant differences were found between elected and appointed boards and between the superintendents of elected and appointed boards.

All unit means for all categories of respondents for each policy issue area fell between the “equally responsible” and the “superintendent primarily responsible” position. Differences, although statistically significant, did not represent a wide range of differing perceptions. Significant differences were not practical differences. The data analysis confirmed that elected school board members are responsive to the electorate but also revealed that appointed school board members are also very active.

Confirming interviews revealed that school board members, whether elected or appointed, are very involved in school governance. School board members in Virginia appeared to be responsive to the people they serve if elected and responsible for the welfare of children if appointed. Their level and type of participation has required superintendents to adopt a political-professional orientation in which they gather requested information, communicate it, anticipate board members’ needs, define and redefine roles, and engage in pre-decisional social processes with their boards. Interview data confirmed that practical differences between the board types in terms of role perceptions are minimal and that the differences in role perceptions between the positions are characteristic of an open system in which all stakeholders have input. The dynamic interaction of superintendents, school boards and communities was explained by sociopolitical models of agenda-setting and negotiation and exchange.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

Ecclesiastes, Chapter 11, verse 1

Endeavors such as this have long histories. The histories are peopled with parents, teachers, spouses, children, bosses, and professors united by their support of and/or inspiration for the writer. Their investment is the “bread upon the waters.” for bread and water are ancient symbols of nurturance. To all who have nurtured me, I owe a profound debt of gratitude.

I thank my parents, Lester and Jean Peterson, who started me on life’s journey. Along the way, they taught me persistence, integrity, compassion, and the value of an education. Because they were first confident in me, I grew to be confident of myself.

I am grateful to Dr. Robert Hanny and Dr. James Stronge who have taught and supported me through this endeavor as well as countless projects over many years. I will always remember their patience and tolerance.

I am grateful to my daughters, Michele and Kristin, for understanding when school and work kept me from sharing more fully in their lives. As they pursue their own academic careers, they will surely appreciate lessons learned in our home: a passion for learning is both a blessing and a curse. May the cup of blessing be the greater of the two.

To my husband, Terry, who sacrificed the most to help me to complete this educational adventure, I am grateful. He has cast so much “bread” for so “many days!” We will find it now together.

ROLE PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED  
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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Mr. Summer: Now gentlemen, come forward like men and vote your sentiments and say that the poor white man and the negro [sic] shall have no rights in Virginia, so that they may emigrate to a richer and more fertile and liberty-loving soil. (Report of the Proceedings and Debates of the Constitutional Convention, 1901-1902, 1928, p. 1830)

With these words, Mr. Sumner, a delegate to the 1901-1902 Virginia Constitutional Convention, responded to a proposal to change the means of selection of school trustees from an appointed to an elected method. The proposal failed, retaining the process of appointment of school board members. Given Mr. Summer's sentiments, it is not surprising that this Constitution prohibited the education of white and "colored" children in the same schools. The Constitution of 1902 also placed such heavy restrictions on voter registration that the number of Virginia voters relative to the total population remained lower than any other state's until the latter half of the 1960s (Salmon & Campbell, 1994). For the greater part of the twentieth century, Virginia lived under laws that denied full participation in democratic governance to all of its citizens.

Until the intrusions of federal legislation in the latter half of this century, Virginia's political history was a chronicle of exclusionary practices designed to reduce political conflict within the Commonwealth. In 1992, Virginia passed a law that allowed



local school divisions to determine the method of school board selection, a law that increased the possibility of political conflict in matters of local school governance.

Schattschneider, a political theorist, (1975) viewed the history of American politics as a perennial struggle between tendencies toward “privatizing conflict,” which restrict its scope, and tendencies toward “socializing conflict,” which enlarge its scope. Control of the scope of conflict has always been a prime instrument of political strategy (Cistone, 1975; Iannoccone, 1977; Schattschneider, 1975). The Virginia Elected School Board (ESB) Referendum allows localities to enlarge the scope of political conflict by electing school boards.

Since 1994, 102 of the 136 Virginia school divisions have opted for elected school boards (Virginia School Board Association, 1995). In Schattschneider’s terms, these Virginia communities have chosen to socialize conflict, to open the political processes of school governance to greater citizen participation. It is likely that fuller and more public discussions of value questions will follow in these localities. Responsiveness of elected school board members to a constituency of voters is a new phenomenon in Virginia. This study focused on role perceptions related to school governance held by superintendents and school board members in localities that elect and in localities that appoint their boards of education.

### Background of the Study

Gross, Wronski and Hanson (1962) captured the historical sense of America’s reverence for school boards:

America has always cherished a belief that face-to-face democracy, the democracy of the small town, the democracy of the town meeting, is the

cornerstone of the good life. Nowhere has the social philosophy revealed itself more clearly than in our faith in the local public school and the local school district. (pp. 78-79)

Americans have long held that face-to-face democracy, the democracy of the town meeting, is the ideal form of governance. The observations in the mid-19th century hold true in contemporary times according to Lutz and Merz (1992) who cited the classic observations of American democratic school governance of de Tocqueville (1835/1956) to explain that community is a concept essential to the operation of politics as the “will of the people,” the “grassroots” or “taproots” of the democratic system. Jacksonian democracy, a tradition espousing a pure rather than a representative democracy, can be observed in the election of local school boards. School boards exist to represent the will of the people (Lutz & Merz, 1992, pp. 36-39).

In Virginia, the “will of the people” in regard to school governance has been expressed (or not expressed) for almost a century through appointed school boards. In 1988, 95% of school board members in the United States were elected by their constituencies (Cameron, Underwood, & Fortune, 1988). Prior to 1992, Virginia was the only state in the United States that did not allow school board elections. School board members were appointed until legislation, the Elected School Board Referendum (ESB) of 1992 (Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, 1992, p. 852), offered the communities of Virginia school divisions the opportunity to change the way school board members are selected. In 1995, the Virginia School Board Association predicted that by July of 1996, 522 elected school board members would sit on local boards, representing 62% of all school board members statewide (Virginia School Board

Association. 1995). One hundred and two Virginia localities have approved the ESB Referendum; three have defeated it (Virginia School Board Association. 1995).

Placing school governance closer to the citizens of Virginia marked an ideological and structural change for all 102 Virginia localities that have approved the ESB Referendum. If political theorists such as Schattschneider (1975) and Iannoccone and Lutz (1970) are correct, this change may have an effect on the way school boards and superintendents interact in these Virginia school districts. It is predictable that school board members may feel compelled to respond to their constituencies, to be accountable to the citizens (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Hurwitz, 1972; Konnert & Augenstein, 1990; Shannon, 1994; Weller, Brown, & Flynn, 1991). This feeling may be heightened by stated expectations of constituencies for accountability ("More school boards to be chosen," 1995). As school board members interpret their responsibilities to electors, they may find the need to control school governance issues that were previously the domain of the superintendent. It is possible that new dynamics in superintendent-school board relationships may be developing in Virginia. Virginia's recent changes in school board selection process raise the question of whether selection process affects the working relationships of boards and superintendents.

### Significance of the Study

Given the changes in participation and community values, have 102 localities in Virginia experienced a change in school board values? Since elected boards may feel themselves accountable to the public who have granted them office, superintendents may find that new rules apply to the interaction of board and superintendent in the process of school governance. As superintendents in Virginia work with elected boards, will they

need to adjust their working relationships to manage a new set of expectations and tensions? This study explored the working relationships between superintendents and school boards for both elected and appointed boards.

Grady and Bryant (1989, 1991) noted that the long-standing tension between educational governance and management has been a frequent subject of study. Disagreement over the roles of superintendents and school boards is a continual issue (Chance, 1992; Cressman, 1995; Godfrey & Swanchak, 1985; Grady & Bryant, 1989, 1991; Hentges, 1986; McCurdy, 1993; Smith, 1986; Tallerico, 1989). Wilson (1960) emphasized the importance of “the superintendent’s developing proper working relationships with the board of education by separating the executive and legislative functions” (p. 29). Knezevich (1975) defined administration as the function that “Exists to implement the decisions of a legislative body” (p. 3). Knezevich (1975) also recognized that confusion between policy formation and policy execution is a frequent source of contention between school boards and superintendents. A precise separation, he noted, is seldom possible. Boards and superintendents must clarify their expectations of each other.

Superintendents in school divisions that have changed their board selection process need to be aware of and sensitive to the implications for superintendent and board interactions that result. The main conflict between boards and superintendents arises from their perception of their roles (Alvey & Underwood, 1985; Glass, 1992; Hayden, 1986). Roles are influenced and determined by sources of power for both superintendents and school boards (Zeigler & Jennings, 1974). Election of school board members gives rise to

a constituency which subsequently presents a dimension to power relationships that superintendents in Virginia have not had to consider.

The relationship between school board members and the superintendent is critical to the process of school governance (Matika, 1991). Therefore, the importance of the superintendent-school board relationship cannot be overemphasized. When there is a stable, productive working relationship between the superintendent and the board, the system can focus on educational priorities and meet its goals. Secondly, where stable, productive relationships built upon mutual respect and agreement about goals and priorities exist between the superintendent and the board, the superintendent tends to be reappointed. When there is discord, confusion about goals and priorities, and unresponsiveness to the community, a superintendent often finds himself or herself job hunting (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Iannoccone & Lutz, 1970; Konnert & Augenstein, 1990; McCurdy, 1993).

### Problem

This study determined whether perceptions of role in the process of school governance differed in elected and appointed school divisions in Virginia. Because the literature revealed that control of school governance has not been found to be a unitary construct but differs by types of issues, perception of role was studied along the four issue areas identified by Alvey in his 1985 national study of the separation of responsibilities of superintendents and school board members (Alvey, 1985) and replicated by Cressman in a Pennsylvania study in 1995 (Cressman, 1995):

#### 1. Administration and Organization of the School System.

2. Employee and Pupil Personnel Services.
3. Business and Financial Management. and
4. Curriculum and Instruction.

The questions of concern related to how differences might be revealed in the roles assumed by elected and appointed school boards and their superintendents as they work together to resolve these types of issues.

### Research Hypotheses

Is there a difference in perceptions of roles and if so, what are the dimensions of the differences? To answer these questions, the following research hypotheses will be explored:

1. There is a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance by board type (elected or appointed) or position (school board member or superintendent) for the category of policy issue: Administration and Organization.
2. There is a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance by board type (elected or appointed) or position (school board member or superintendent) for the category of policy issue: Employee and Pupil Personnel Services.
3. There is a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance by board type (elected or appointed) or position (school board member or superintendent) for the category of policy issue: Business and Financial Management.
4. There is a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance by board type (elected or appointed) or position (school board member or superintendent) for the category of policy issue: Curriculum and Instruction.

### Theoretical Basis for the Study

Schattschneider (1975) wrote of the scope of conflict as a political strategy which determines how big the “fight” will be. The question of restricting the scope of conflict to control the results is an old question, one which was central to our founders:

The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily they will concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of others.

(Madison cited in Fairfield, 1966, p. 22)

Madison understood the tyranny of a powerful few. The American system was designed to enlarge the scope of conflict, to “socialize conflict,” in the words of Schattschneider (1975). “Privatizing conflict” limits the scope, often limiting the selection of actors and keeping whatever conflict may exist completely invisible to observers of the process. Socializing conflict invites participation and debate. This study examined the effects of “socializing conflict” in school governance on superintendents and school boards in the area of policy making. The literature indicated that three theoretical models form the basis of research on school governance in the policy area: (1) Decision/Output Theory, (2) Continuous Competition/Participation Theory, (3) Dissatisfaction Theory.

Decision/Output Theory. Wirt and Kirst (1992) based their Decision/Output Theory on Easton's (1965) political systems model. Easton's model described the flow of demands and supports from the external environment to the internal policy making areas of political systems. When analyzed from a systems perspective, the major focus is on resource allocation. As Wirt and Kirst (1992) operationalized Easton's model to schools, the community makes demands, designated as "inputs," on the schools. The school board then "converts" the inputs, often combining them, reducing them, or absorbing them without reaction. Their "output" is a policy decision.

In this model, often called Responsivist, the perspective is the system. The measure of democracy is in the relationship between the inputs, demands and supports from the outside, and the outputs, the policies or the lack of policy. Wirt and Kirst (1992) found the relationship between citizen input and policy output low and concluded that school governance as a measure of response to the public is not very democratic.

Continuous Competition/Participation Theory. Zeigler and Jennings (1974) developed the Continuous Competition/Participation Theory. Their work described the usually long periods of quiescence that occur between conflict episodes within school boards. The long periods without conflict are attended by low, participation in elections. Candidates for school boards are not substantively distinguishable from each other on election issues, competition is relatively low and incumbents are rarely defeated. School elections contain few democratic control mechanisms. Research based on this theory found that school boards frequently did not control policy decisions: superintendents did (Mitchell, 1978). Although there was a time when research on this theory concluded that whatever may have been gained in democratic control through election was lost in school



board-superintendent interaction. continuing research has revealed movement away from the professional-dominant position of the superintendent creating a greater balance between lay and professional control and increasing democratic characteristics of school governance (Tucker & Zeigler, 1980a; Zeigler, Kehoe, & Reisman, 1985). Tallerico's (1988) research bolstered the view that schools were governed by a democratic process characterized by safety valves which allowed consideration for constituency opinions, professional/executive opinions, and lay/legislative opinions. One such safety valve cited by Tallerico (1988) is the constituency exerting its influence through defeating incumbent school board members, electing board members more sympathetic to the constituency, and ultimately replacing the superintendent. This safety-valve mechanism is encompassed in the Dissatisfaction Theory of Democracy proposed by Iannoccone and Lutz (1970).

Dissatisfaction Theory. Dissatisfaction Theory (Iannoccone & Lutz, 1970) begins in community values and is derived from a cultural model. Unlike the Decision/Output model, the scope of conflict is an issue in Dissatisfaction Theory and the Continuous Competition/Participation model. However, the peculiar circumstances of Virginia's cultural evolution and the fact that it entered the arena of school board elections so late in the twentieth century makes the Dissatisfaction Theory, which proposes a cultural theory base and carefully considers scope and participation issues, more relevant to the Virginia experience.

Iannoccone and Lutz (1970), developers of Dissatisfaction Theory, concurred with Wirt and Kirst (1992) and Zeigler and Jennings (1974) on the issues of competition, low participation, and lack of general responsiveness to citizen demands. However, they

viewed democracy as a process not an end. For Iannoccone and Lutz, it may be more correct to ask when is educational governance democratic rather than if it is democratic. For Iannoccone and Lutz, school governance is episodically democratic when dissatisfied voters make themselves heard through the electoral process. Their operational definition of democratic control is that mandates arise among the citizenry and are passed to the board through the electoral process and come to fruition in policy changes made as a result of a turnover in the district's chief executive officer (Iannoccone & Lutz, 1970; Lutz & Merz, 1992; Lutz & Wang, 1987; Mitchell, 1978).

Dissatisfaction Theory proposes a model in which a stable community elects a representative board whose values are congruent with those of the community. This board then selects a superintendent with similar values who will administer an educational program that reflects those values. Episodes of dissatisfaction with school board policies cause incumbent school board member defeat and subsequent involuntary superintendent turnover. Iannoccone and Lutz (1970) proposed four political factors in dissatisfaction theory: change in community values, change in citizen participation, change in school board values, and change in school board policy.

The initial factor and key to Dissatisfaction Theory is values. When a community changes, a gap begins to develop between the values of the community and the values of the school board. The community no longer sees the schools as meeting its needs. As communities change, the board and the superintendent are usually unaware of the change or refuse to take it seriously, but when the gap becomes intolerable, the community removes board members through the electoral process. Removal of the chief executive

officer usually follows within three years of the turning point election (Lutz & Iannoccone, 1986; Weller, Brown, & Flynn, 1991; Weninger & Stout, 1989).

Community values are held in the culture of the community. Geertz defined culture as a set of central mechanisms -- plans, recipes, rules, instructions. . . for the governing of behaviors" (1973, p. 44). According to Geertz, humans are ungovernable without culture, so it becomes important to place political processes in a cultural context. Dissatisfaction Theory is described in terms of the community, its culture, and its subcultures, elements which are not as critical to the theories of Wirt and Kirst (1992) or Zeigler and Jennings (1974).

Time is a critical element in studies based on the Dissatisfaction Theory. Lutz and Iannaccone (1986) demonstrated that it usually takes 7 to 10 years for demographic changes in the school district to give way to a successful insurgence on the school board with superintendent replacement following a turning-point-election within three years. Other researchers (Flynn, 1984; Freeborn, 1966; Kitchens, 1994; Lutz, 1982; Sullivan, 1990; Walden, 1966) have recommended a 10-year investigative time span. Because Virginia's experience with elected school boards is relatively recent (1992-1997), this study did undertake a test of the theory per se. Rather, this study reflected upon the theory's elements of community values and change in participation in Virginia to serve as background for discovery of differences in school board values as represented by reports of perception of control in various types of policy issues. The change in the culture of Virginia from 1870 to the present gives Dissatisfaction Theory the greatest explanatory power for this study.

### The Nature of Politics in Education

According to Iannaccone (1977), research on educational politics follows one of three alternative orientations which can be understood as three distinct questions:

1. What is the nature of the politics of educational change?
2. What is the nature of political change in education?
3. What is the nature of change in the politics of education? (p. 255)

Iannoccone's (1977) second question is relevant to the study of decision making differences between elected and appointed boards in Virginia. Wirt and Kirst (1992) defined the political act as the struggle of groups to secure the authoritative support of government for their values. The school board decision making function is the arena for the interplay of values expressed as conflict. The political function of school governance is to manage or to channel conflict and is inevitable in our society (Bacharach, 1983; Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Knezevich, 1984; Konnert & Augenstein, 1990; Zeigler, 1975).

The question of managing conflict was raised by Schattschneider (1975) who framed it in terms of two basic elements of political conflict: "(a) the small number of people who are actively engaged in the center of a conflict and (b) the much larger audience fascinated by the conflict who may enter it as contestants rather than remain as spectators" (p. 2). Opening democratic processes in a pluralistic society enlarges the scope of conflict. In Virginia, superintendents who must manage conflict would be well advised to be aware of their new and diverse constituencies.

### Operational Definitions

1. Policy "A principle to be followed in deciding cases or problems that may arise in a given phase of education" (Tucker & Zeigler, 1977, p. 35).
2. School Board Member Present member of a local board of education in Virginia as identified by the Virginia School Board Association who has served for a minimum of six months.
3. Superintendent The chief school administrator or chief executive officer in charge of an entire school division as identified by the Virginia Department of Education. He or she is directly responsible to the board of education members and reports to them.
4. Appointed School Board A school board in a locality in Virginia that has maintained the traditional method of selection of members and therefore has no elected school board members.
5. Elected School Board A school board in a locality in Virginia that has passed the ESB Referendum, has held elections, and has seated at least one elected member.

### Limitations

The following limitations may impact the interpretation of the results of this study:

1. The study is limited to school board members and superintendents in Virginia.
2. The study is limited to school board members and superintendents in Virginia in 1997.

### Assumptions

Listed below are the major assumptions of this study:

1. School governance at the local level has two major functions: policy formation and

policy administration.

2. The roles of school board members and school division superintendents regarding the two major functions (policy formation and policy administration) are not absolutely defined but are part of an on-going dynamic each school board and superintendent must define for themselves.
3. Self-reports of perceptions of control of policy issues are valid indicators of the roles assumed by school board members and superintendents.
4. The study assumed that respondents provided knowledgeable and honest responses.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

Politics is the “authoritative allocation of resources” (Dahl, 1961). Because education allocates resources according to a value system, education is enmeshed in politics. Those who are directly involved are the school board and the superintendent. Major researchers considering the politicization of education (Bacharach, 1983; Callahan, 1962; Iannaccone, 1967; Knezevich, 1984; Konnert & Augenstein, 1990; Spring, 1986; Zeigler & Jennings, 1974) have been concerned with the question of who has the power to authoritatively allocate resources. In short, who governs the schools?

The institution of the American school board is a testament to the principle of local control. Iannoccone and Lutz (1970) described how local control renews itself through a cycle of quiescence and dissatisfaction. Essentially, the essence of Dissatisfaction Theory predicts and describes the process of the alignment and realignment of school governance with community values.

The direct election of school boards, a new phenomenon for Virginians, represents a mechanism by which community values are exerted in the schools. The superintendent, who is appointed by the school board, is at risk when community values change and incumbent school board members are defeated. New members' responses to the community may put them at odds with the superintendent on policy issues. Policy decisions may become contentious. Eventually, school boards may seek to remove the superintendent. Dissatisfaction Theory contends that schools change as a reflection of community change, that roles of elected school board members will be shaped to some

degree by their perception of community expectations and their concepts of democracy. that superintendents' roles may have to adjust in order to succeed with a newly elected board, and that conflict on policy issues will increase with the degree of diversity within the community.

The review of the literature summarizes the related studies, research, and theories on this dissertation topic as well as the history of educational governance in the United States with particular attention to Virginia's unique historical development of educational governance. This chapter reviews the concept of culture, duties, responsibilities, and roles assumed by school boards and superintendents, research related to role perceptions of school boards and superintendents, research comparing elected and appointed boards, and a review of Virginia political history as it relates to public schools from 1870 to the present.

#### History of School Governance in the United States

The roots of public schools are in the soil of New England. In 1642, in the Massachusetts colony, a law called on "certain chosen men of each town to ascertain from time to time, if parents and masters were attending to their educational duties; if the children were being trained in learning and labor and other employments" (in Russo, 1992, p. 4). This law failed because it failed to mandate public schools. It was followed in 1647 by the Old Deluder Law which required all towns to establish and maintain public schools. Towns not observing the law could be fined (Russo, 1992). The responsibility for the education of children was thus passed from parents and masters to local government.



Local control over education received an even stronger mandate in 1693 with the enactment of a law that called on towns and their selectmen to jointly maintain the schools. Funding of the schools was to be done by a tax levy if, at a town meeting, the residents so directed the selectmen. Lay control of public schools was established in Massachusetts well before 1700.

In the infancy of public education, control was not separated from other government responsibilities. In their town meetings, the citizens administered the schools. As populations grew and municipal management became more complex, control of school governance was often turned over to selectmen who were chosen by the citizens to administer the town government and schools. In 1721 in Boston, a permanent committee for school business was appointed by the selectmen (Goldhammer, 1964).

The development of school government followed these steps: (1) town meetings offered citizens direct participation in school governance; (2) citizens chose selectmen to run the schools; (3) visiting committees appointed by selectmen ran the schools; (4) permanent school committees were appointed by the selectmen to run the schools; and (5) permanent committees evolved into boards of education as state governments were formed (Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand, & Usdan, 1975).

Religion held a prominent place in colonial education and schooling had a particularly English influence (Cremin, 1970; Spring, 1986). Prior to the Revolution, public education was supplemental to the family's responsibility to educate children. After the Revolutionary War, public education was viewed in a broader perspective. It became a service to the needs of government and society. Education as a requisite to personal salvation gave way to education as a requisite to participatory government.

Additionally, after the Revolution, public education was viewed as a method for building a new nationalism (Spring, 1986). Cremin (1970) and Callahan (1960) suggested that the period between 1800 and 1860 was a period of stabilization for public education as well as for the nation.

The Jacksonian period of the early 1800s encouraged greater participation in elections. Not surprisingly, given the spirit of the times, most school districts chose their school board members by election during the 1800s. By the turn of the century, the selection of board members had become a very political activity often resulting in corruption and unmanageably large school boards. Efforts were made in the late 1800s and the early 1900s to reform school politics by reducing the number of people on boards, changing elections from single-member ward-based elections to at-large, or blue ribbon appointed boards (Lutz & Iannaccone, 1995; Mann, 1975).

The reform movement was motivated by concern about corruption in the schools because of the intrusion of politics and political machines (Lutz & Iannaccone, 1995; Tucker & Zeigler, 1980b). This was an urban reform in which Woodrow Wilson played a significant role. He suggested that the development of public policy be left to elected politicians but the administration of those policies be placed in the hands of presumably incorruptible, highly trained professionals, hired to "civil service" positions. The reform efforts succeeded in combining boards of education, reducing the number of members, and continuing the practice of neighborhood schools (Mann, 1975). The effect of these reforms was to change the model for school administration from the political model to the corporate board model (Cubberly, 1914; Stelzer, 1974; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Under the corporate board model, conflict was significantly reduced by separating education

from politics and introducing the concepts of neutral competence and executive leadership to educational management (Kaufman, 1969; Stelzer, 1974; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Three phases describe the history of school governance from 1835 to the present day. The first, called “maximum feasible participation” lasted from approximately 1835 to 1900. The second reform period from 1900 to 1968, which Callahan (1962) described in terms of efficiency and scientific management of education was heavily influenced by the needs of industry. The third period, a period of expanding social and economic responsibility for public schools and of contracting responsibility for laymen and parents, began in 1968 and continues to the present (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Tucker & Zeigler, 1980a, Tyack, 1992).

The present period, while characterized by expanding social and economic roles for public schools, also evidences “efficiency” characteristics of the second reform era. In addition to embracing roles in social development and economic preparedness, schools have also felt the effects of reform efforts aimed toward standardization and accountability. The second National Education Summit held in New York in March 1996 resulted in a call for “internationally competitive academic standards” and rigorous tests to measure student achievement. The movement toward national and state academic standards has received broad support with concern expressed for the chaos of separate sets of standards and different levels of expectation (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Nodding, 1997). Although the movement toward standards and measurement harkens to the previous efficiency era of reform, this era is distinguished from that by its additional overarching concern with the broad social and economic issues delegated to the schools.

Changes in school governance can be traced to the change from a rural society to an urban one. Cubberly (1920) pointed out that an important factor in the growth of the American public school was the rise of cities and manufacturing, a point which Callahan (1962) found true from his historical perspective on the second reform era, the era marked by efficiency and sparked by industrialization. The organization of school governance rises from the needs of the community. Urbanization, industrialization, the rise of heterogeneous populations, and regional differences have dictated different responses to the method for organizing school governance at different points and in different places in our growth as a nation.

Although the New England model, a model of broad citizen participation in school governance, was generally adopted by the states in the industrial Northeast and West, the South remained unique. The Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 forced the dismantling of legal segregation in southern schools. This propelled the South into the third era of school reform, the era of expanding social and economic responsibility, arguably accelerating its progress into that era more quickly than other areas of the country precisely because of the societal and legal changes which were required.

#### History of School Governance in Virginia

Colonial Virginia. The Virginia Colony developed very differently than the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Jamestown settlers were not fleeing persecution or rejecting an autocratic church or state. They embraced the Church of England and all things English. They did not govern themselves by majority vote as the settlers at Plymouth did voluntarily. They were the English aristocracy and their intention was to

transplant the English social caste system and system of government in a new land. In Virginia, two social classes emerged immediately: a strong, elite, and powerful land-holding class and a lower social class composed of laborers, indentured servants, and slaves. Unlike the Massachusetts colony, a strong middle class did not develop in Virginia for nearly two centuries (Heatwole, 1916; Department of Education, 1970).

As it had begun in Massachusetts, education in Virginia was viewed as the duty of the family, an English tradition. Governor Sir William Berkeley characterized this educational policy as “the same course that is taken in England . . . every man according to his ability instructing his children” (Heatwole, 1916, p. 10). Since all the Virginia settlers were adults, the actual question of education did not arise until 1619 when 100 orphans from England arrived. A stipulation of their arrival in Virginia was that their masters should teach them a trade, and 500 pounds was sent with the orphans for that purpose (Heatwole, 1916). Apprenticeship laws were enacted in 1643, 1646, and 1672 which attempted to provide vocational and religious training for indigent children, orphans and other children without guardians (Department of Education, 1970).

Although Virginia’s first schools, “free schools,” were established to aid the colony’s orphans and needy children and to supplement the apprenticeship programs, neighbors often joined together in cooperative ventures to establish private schools. They were often located in fields no longer used for farming and were known as “Old Field” schools. The quality of the schools was uneven and was not monitored in any way by the larger community. They were “local, private, free enterprise operations” (Department of Education, 1970).

The land-owning class employed tutors for their children. Most of the tutors were clergymen who returned to England at the start of the Revolution. Grammar schools and academies were patronized by the gentry and constituted the other principal type of early school in Virginia. The private education system within the State, with academies as its flagship schools, continued with little change until 1860.

Post-Revolution Virginia. Private schools as the major source of education in Virginia found a vocal critic in Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson voiced strong opinions about the service education should pay to democratic government in Virginia. In 1779, Jefferson introduced in the state legislature “A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge.” This bill proposed elementary schools, secondary schools, and colleges. All free children would be entitled to attend elementary school for three years without charge; their educational funding would be supported by local taxation. Jefferson’s proposal would select the most able elementary school children to attend a secondary school, again at public expense. The outstanding boys from the secondary level would be allowed to continue at college at public expense and boys who were not outstanding could continue at their parents’ expense.

The design of the proposed system can be credited for its failure. Jefferson’s plans failed because school governance was to be the responsibility of elected aldermen. County courts were made responsible for holding elections of aldermen and they never did. In 1796 the legislature established a system of elementary schools as outlined by Jefferson but the county courts again failed to take the first steps. Jefferson recognized the reason for the failure:

The experience of twenty years has proved that no court will ever begin it.

The reason is obvious. The members of the court are the wealthy members of the counties, and as the expenses of the schools are to be defrayed by a contribution proportioned to the aggregate of other taxes which everyone pays, they consider it a plan to educate the poor at the expense of the rich. (Morrison, 1917, p. 9)

Left to local initiative, essentially in the hands of the wealthy, Jefferson's plan was doomed to fail.

The 1800s. In 1810, the General Assembly created the Literary Fund, establishing a funding basis for free public school in Virginia. However, the original purpose of the Fund, to provide primary schooling for those unable to afford private school education, was not accomplished until 1822. Even then it was 1829 until the funds were allowed to be used for buildings or equipment as a result of the District School Law. This act empowered school commissioners who were appointed by the courts to establish district free schools and make local residents responsible for 60 % of the building costs and 50 % of the teachers' salaries with the balance to be paid from the Literary Fund. The maximum rate available from the Literary Fund was 4 ¢ per pupil for each day of school attendance (Department of Education, 1970).

The concept of a school district emerged from legislation passed by the General Assembly in 1846. That legislation provided for the establishment of a local school system under a county school superintendent, with commissioners from each district

constituting a county school board. Again, the matter of local tax support was left entirely to local initiative, and again, results were ineffective.

The Literary Fund and legislation of the mid-1800s aided in establishing education as a state responsibility . . . at least for the needy. Despite the growing number of children educated in public schools prior to 1871, the preferred method of education in Virginia remained private. Public schools in Virginia were charitable institutions.

Virginia did not suffer from a lack of forward-thinking educators, nor was it totally ignorant of the educational systems existent in the Northeast states. In the mid-1800s, the House Committee, Directors of the Literary Fund, Henry Ruffner, and Superintendent Smith of the Virginia Military Institute all submitted plans for a better system of education for the state. In these reports, one finds as suggestions of outside influences: (a) support of colleges, (b) eight months' sessions, (c) establishment of normal schools, (d) schools for girls, (e) pensions for teachers, (f) State Board of Education, (g) state superintendent of schools, (h) school journals, (i) division superintendents, (j) school libraries, and (k) better school houses. Despite this "abundant wisdom" (Heatwole, 1916), academies remained the preferred method of education.

Virginia's social order can be held responsible for a climate which fostered private education as the preferred form. Discussions of the history of school governance in Virginia prior to the Civil War are marked by the powerful elite's refusal to support or participate in public education. The terrible toll exacted on Virginia by the Civil War included the destruction of her social and economic orders. Only when Virginia had been devastated would public schooling become a priority.



The Reconstruction Period. A complete system of public education in Virginia was adopted July 6, 1869 as part of a new state constitution which was crafted for Virginians by “. . . 33 conservatives and 72 radicals, 24 of whom were negroes [sic]. Besides the negroes, the radical delegates were: 14 Virginians, 14 from New York, 3 each from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and England, 1 each from Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, Washington City, South Carolina, Ireland, Scotland, and Canada” (Heatwole, 1916, p. 214). With passage of the new Constitution and the Free Public Schools Act, Virginia got a superintendent of public instruction, a board of education, county superintendents, school districts, and a system of elected trustees to run the schools (Heatwole, 1916).

According to Heatwole (1916), the people of Massachusetts were more homogeneous, and their interests were different than those of the people of Virginia from the inception of the two colonies. Public education found a more fertile ground in the soils of democratic New England than it did in aristocratic Virginia. When public education did truly come to Virginia, it was not gradual or evolutionary. It came as a result of Reconstruction, of external forces imposed upon a conquered people. The lack of self-determination in the founding of free public schools in Virginia in 1869 would be revisited in 1902 when white Virginians convened to re-write the state constitution returning public education to the caste structure characteristic of ante-bellum Virginia.

To understand present day school governance issues in Virginia is to understand the structural changes to the society that occurred in the post-Civil War period that influenced the 1902 Constitution, a document that guided Virginia school governance well into the latter half of this century. The evolution of the roles of school board

members and superintendents and school board selection process also must be seen in the context of Virginia's unique historical development. Anthropological models of cultural components and documents and research relating to roles of school board members and superintendents and selection process of school boards provide the basis for understanding Virginia's school governance history since 1870.

### The Culture Factor

Open and closed cultures. Because Dissatisfaction Theory rests on sociological, economic, and political factors related to conflict, anthropological models offer some of the better attempts to integrate these concepts within a theory of culture and help to explain Virginia's struggle with social and political issues related to education. The theories of culture which have the most relevance for Virginia's cultural journey from Reconstruction to the present day are those which describe open and closed cultures.

Culture is not behavior. Rather, culture is the set of control mechanisms for the governing of behavior. It is the rules, roles, beliefs, traditions, literature, and sanctions that provide the standards or norms against which behavior is judged. New members of a culture are socialized into the cultural group (Geertz, 1973; Lutz & Merz, 1992; Ramsey, 1978).

Because political processes take place within a culture, it is important to understand the cultural context. Political culture is one theme of school board research. There are many theories for examining the political cultural context. Those which address open and closed cultures are *gemeinschaft/gesellschaft*, sacred/secular, heterogeneous/homogeneous, structural pluralism/cultural pluralism, and elite/arena. Each of these will be addressed in turn.

Gemeinschaft/gesellschaft. Tonnies (1887/1957) proposed concepts for understanding the structural aspects of a community. He generalized two types of social relationships: *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*. Tonnies, whose work was translated by Loomis (1957) as Community and Society (see Tonnies), was concerned about the transition from agrarian to industrial society and the implications for human interaction and human condition in an industrial society.

*Gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* are opposite ends of an ideal-typical continuum which posits the concept of unity at one end (*gemeinschaft*) and the concept of separateness at the other end (*gesellschaft*). *Gemeinschaft*, “folklike,” is a bonding together of people to other people, roles with other roles, as in the relationships within a family or church. *Gesellschaft* is “urbanlike.” People remain independent of each other and the role a person plays in one situation is totally separate from other roles he or she may play. People actually live in two social contexts, at one extreme unified and closed and at the other extreme separate and open.

Sacred/secular. A parallel to the *gemeinschaft-gesellschaft* continuum is a continuum of community valuing: sacred versus secular (Becker, 1968). Sacred societies resist change and cultivate tradition; they tend to become isolated. In contrast, a secular society generally welcomes change and is usually accessible. Secular societies tend to be open whereas sacred societies tend to be closed.

Although the concepts of *gemeinschaft-gesellschaft* and sacred-secular may seem to be dichotomies, they are not. *Gemeinschaft*/sacred communities operate within *gesellschaft*/secular communities. People are required to operate in both *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* modes of behavior, a requirement which sometimes produces

psychological conflict (Bender, 1978, pp. 136-137). Such conflict is often situationally specific. Situations such as prayer in public schools bring together people who perceive particular issues either through a secular or sacred lens. Individuals who confront an issue through a secular lens do not understand individuals who confront the same issue through a lens of sacred values. The reverse is equally true. As the groups vie for power, conflict rises and negotiation becomes difficult.

Homogeneity/heterogeneity. If *gemeinschaft-gesellschaft* helps one to understand the structure of culture and sacred-secular helps one to understand the valuing within communities, homogeneity and heterogeneity help one to understand how culture evaluates behavior. Diversity in the community is the key concept in heterogeneous and homogeneous cultures. In a homogeneous culture there is a single scale for evaluating behavior (Lutz & Iannoccone, 1978; Sanday, 1976). These societies tend to have numerically insignificant minorities and tend to form power elites (Lutz & Merz, 1992). Heterogeneous cultures have a mainstream culture but allow separate subcultures to flourish within and parallel to the mainstream.

Sanday (1976, pp. 60-61) classified individuals in heterogeneous societies as follows:

1. Mainstream - functionally assimilated into the culture that operates and dominates the society.
2. Bicultural - can operate in both mainstream and another cultural unit.
3. Culturally different - functionally assimilated into a cultural unit different from the mainstream culture.

4. Culturally marginal - less than functionally assimilated into any cultural unit.

Heterogeneous cultures have various parallel scales for judging behavior.

Structural pluralism/ cultural pluralism. In a heterogeneous and structurally pluralistic culture, the status of cultural groups differentiates behavioral judgments. Each status group deprecates the next lower cultural rank. Ranks carry different privilege and opportunity. The resulting caste system effectively and progressively closes opportunity to members of “lower” groups (Ramsey, 1978; Sanday, 1976).

Heterogeneous cultures which are culturally pluralistic provide equal opportunities, participation, and rewards regardless of cultural type. The unit of measurement in a culturally pluralistic society is the individual and not his or her cultural type (Lutz & Iannoccone, 1978; Sanday, 1976). Communities which are culturally pluralistic are open cultures.

Conflict erupts when structural pluralism operates to advantage upper and middle class people and to disadvantage other groups. Researchers in the 1970s found that school boards tended to be composed of individuals from the mainstream culture and operated from an upper and middle class bias (Lutz, 1975; Lutz & Iannoccone, 1978; Zeigler & Jennings, 1974), creating a political culture which was a type of structural pluralism. The more heterogeneous the culture outside the school board, the more likely a structurally pluralistic school board will be to encounter conflict (Lutz, 1975). Contemporary observations are less likely to note class distinctions between the school board and the community it serves than they are to observe conflict over strongly held convictions by well-financed sub-groups within communities (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

Elite/arena. Bailey (1965) developed the concepts of elite and arena school boards to describe different school board culture types. The elite board views itself as trustee. Decisions of the elite board are generally unanimous, a sense of unity is cultivated, and debate is nonpublic. The elite board is typical of homogeneous cultures. Arena boards are representatives of a broad constituency. When a community has an arena type board, conflict is common and accepted. Unlike the elite boards, arena school boards think of themselves as “community in council” (Lutz & Merz, 1992, p. 57). All the values in the community find voice in this council. The arena board publicly debates these values. Nonunanimous votes are common.

Determinants of school board culture. There are three predictive conceptual variables in the model of school board culture: (a) the cultural diversity of the school district expressed in terms of homogeneity/heterogeneity; (b) the structure of the society expressed as structural or cultural pluralism; (c) the nature of the school board’s council behavior expressed as elite or arena. The variables combine to determine a degree of gap between the community and its board. When the gap is wide, conflict will be high. When the gap is narrow, conflict will be low.

#### Culture/Community Effects on Educational Governance

Community cultures evolve. As communities move from homogeneous to heterogeneous or from heterogeneous to homogeneous in their composition, new values are introduced. Competing values emerge when communities move from homogeneous cultures to heterogeneous cultures. Structural pluralism, the assignment of cultural groups to lesser status than the dominant group and restrictions of opportunity for the group of lesser status, is a source of conflict. When school board membership is representative of

the dominant culture only, the gap between the dominant group and the disadvantaged groups widens. School board members often fail to heed the signals of this widening gap. However, when heterogeneous communities demonstrate cultural pluralism, different cultural voices are equally valued and find expression in the school board culture. School boards that tolerate diverse expression are arena boards. School boards that are closed speak with a unified voice and do not tolerate dissension. When community values change, the ripple effect often extends to school board composition, policies, and superintendent turnover (Jentges, 1988; Maguire, 1989).

### Educational Policy Making as Political Activity

Much of the writing about school governance since the 1960s argues for the desirability of politics in the school. In particular, elected school boards have been touted as the acceptable model of political influence on the schools. This is a departure from the prevailing position that politics and schools should not mix. Most studies of school governance have treated the schools as nonpolitical, businesslike, and professional. The public school system was considered too important to the welfare of this nation to be contaminated by politics (Zeigler & Jennings, 1974). At the turn of the century, the reform policies that rid school governance of the party bosses and corruption had the effect of causing everyone directly involved in school governance to disavow politics. Political scientists ignored school government as a subject of study and left the area as a field of study reserved for schools of education (Zeigler & Jennings, 1974). The citizens were separated from their schools. Rule by professionals was the order of the day and politics was an anathema (Tucker & Zeigler, 1980a).

Tucker and Zeigler (1980a) characterized the 1970s and 1980s as the time when schools became agents of social and economic change. The scope of this change in emphasis began with the landmark decision, Brown v. Board of Education (1954), and has continued to the present. As demands on the schools increased, the population began to exercise political influence to change the organization of the system so that citizen control of schools districts increased. Participation has increased, but with the increase has come people who have educational concerns such as taxes, textbooks, curricula, religion, and other issues. Increasingly, members of boards of education have been chosen as representative of a specific group of people who advocate definite agendas (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, Schlechty, 1992).

Since World War II there has been greater citizen participation in school decisions. That participation has taken the form of election of officials as well as referenda on issues. Single issue school board candidates backed by financially strong political groups are increasingly a part of the reality of school board elections. School governance is no longer in the hands of a professional elite.

#### The Importance of Roles of School Board Members and Superintendents

Role is a central concept of both sociology and social psychology. The roles that superintendents and board members assume in the formulation of policy have far reaching effects for the community and immediate effects for the dynamics of the policy making body. A nationwide survey conducted in 1985 by Alvey concluded that an ongoing rift exists between board members' and superintendents' perception of their roles. A 1992 study by the American Association of School Administrators identified the most difficult problem facing school board members, next to financing, as understanding



their appropriate roles (Glass, 1992). Superintendents and school boards must attend to defining and redefining their roles (Aleshire, 1980; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Joint AASA-NSBA Committee, 1994; McCurdy, 1993). Roles are not static for the people involved in decision making for public schools.

Mason and Gross (1953, pp. 1-7) asked the three essential questions for exploring the place of role in policy formation of school boards:

1. What is the behavioral expectation for the position of superintendent?
2. What is expected of the “counter” position (school boards)?
3. What is expected behaviorally between these two (the superintendent and the board)?

#### Defining the Roles of Superintendents and School Board Members

School governance/policy and school management/administration are separated by a fine line. The school board is ultimately responsible for determining policy and the superintendent has the responsibility for administering policy (Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997). These are distinctions that are easily and frequently blurred.

Goldhammer (1964) stated the role problem:

. . . the professional literature on school board relationships is replete with admonitions for the board to limit its duties to policy making and to reserve all managerial functions for the professional administrative staff. Nowhere in the literature is this distinction sufficiently defined to provide the guidelines which can help individual school boards to determine their operating procedures. (p. 99)

School board powers and duties in Virginia. Virginia school board and superintendent duties as defined by the Virginia School Boards Association (1994) in the Policy Manual are typical of the ambiguity of roles described in the literature. The Policy Manual separates the duties of policy adoption and policy implementation clearly between the school board and the superintendent, respectively. However, clarity in distinguishing boundaries between the two parties disintegrates thereafter. Many duties appear to be joint ventures with minimal potential for controversy.

Table 1 summarizes the lists of duties given to superintendents and school boards in Virginia with identified points of potential conflict (x). “Enforcing school law” is one such area. “Allocation of resources,” a duty given to the board, has a much higher potential for conflict with duties given to the superintendent when personnel, facilities, and finances, all areas of superintendent oversight, are defined as “resources.” Another area of potential conflict appears in the categories of educational leadership and curriculum and instruction. The educational leadership and curriculum and instructional tasks given to the superintendent are also given to the school board in language that delegates to the school board decisions regarding the school year, instructional methods, and curriculum as well as adopting goals and objectives, a major task of educational leadership.

The following table (Table 1) represents the possible points of conflict between the duties given to school boards and those given to superintendents in Virginia.

Table 1

Duties of School Boards and Superintendents in Virginia with Indicators of Potentially Conflicting Role Perceptions.

<b>Superintendent</b>	<b>School Board</b>							
	Adopt a policy	Explain & enforce school law	Manage & control school property	Decide school year, instructional methods, curriculum	Allocate resources	Adopt goals & objectives	Insure lawful & efficient operation	Obtain public comment
Implements policy								
Reports status of personnel, programs, & operations							X	
Liaison between Bd. and personnel					X			
Develops agenda with Bd. Chair	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Educational Leadership				X		X		
Curriculum & Instruction				X		X		
Enforces school laws		X						
Develops procedures for implementing policy							X	
Oversees all personnel functions					X			

<b>Superintendent</b>	<b>Adopt a policy</b>	<b>Explain &amp; enforce school law</b>	<b>Manage &amp; control school property</b>	<b>Decide school year, instructional methods, curriculum</b>	<b>Allocate resources</b>	<b>Adopt goals &amp; objectives</b>	<b>Insure lawful &amp; efficient operation</b>	<b>Obtain public comment</b>
Oversees facilities management			X		X			
Oversees financial management			X		X		X	
Directs community relations								X
Oversees pupil personnel		X						
Liaison between schools & community agencies								

Some duties assigned to the board are oversight duties applied to the superintendent's actions. For example, the board has the duty of insuring lawful and efficient operation while the superintendent must develop procedures for implementing policy. "Insuring lawful and efficient operation" is an oversight duty of the school board which applies to many of the superintendent's duties. Blurring the distinction between oversight responsibility and responsibility for direct action in specific areas is a frequent source of role confusion (Grady & Bryant, 1991; McCurdy, 1993). Four broad issue areas can be generalized from the lists of duties for school board and superintendents: administration and organization, employee and pupil personnel services, business and financial management, and curriculum and instruction.

Perhaps the keystone to conflict or harmony in superintendent and school board relations is the charge for the superintendent to develop the agenda with the board chairperson. There are two ways to conceptualize the "agenda." As an institutional artifact, it is a list of items that the board will consider during a stated meeting time. However, an agenda can be important for what is omitted from the document. These omissions refer to the systemic agenda, the broad spectrum of issues that are ever considered for inclusion on the institutional agenda (Cobb & Elder, 1983). As the controller of information, the superintendent holds a great degree of power over issues for discussion. Policy issues that never appear on the institutional agenda are never adopted or implemented. Institutional agendas can be important for what they do not say.

Policy manual interpretations of the role of school boards is broad. The first duty of the board is to "adopt" policy; however, there is no specific reference to developing, initiating, or formulating policy. Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) provides a

fuller explanation of the role of school boards in its 1993 Virginia School Boards: A Manual for Virginia School Board Members:

Properly, the board directs and the superintendent executes: or, as it is usually expressed, the functions of the board are policy-forming and legislative and those of the superintendent administrative or executive. The board also exercises judicial functions in that it reviews and evaluates, i.e., judges the results of the superintendent's work and hears appeals from the decision of the superintendent under the grievance procedure mandated by the Board of Education. (Barham, Blount, Cannon, & Padgett, 1993, p. 33)

Similar guidance is offered for defining the role of the superintendent.

Virginia School Boards: A Manual for School Board Members (Barham, Blount, Cannon & Padgett, 1993, pp. 34-36) (hereafter Manual) states the role of the superintendent in typically direct language: "he or she runs the schools." The Manual describes ten responsibilities of the superintendent. Among them are ". . . to be the professional adviser of the board, giving it the benefit of his or her professional training. . . This includes not only advice on programs and policies initiated by the board, but recommendations for the adoption of new programs and policies" (p. 35). The role of technical-professional adviser to the board is an important one. The Manual also addresses the issue of personnel, an issue often cited as a major source of conflict (Alvey, 1985; Cressman, 1995; Grady & Bryant, 1991) as a duty of the superintendent: "Because the superintendent is held responsible for the success or failure of the whole school system, he or she has the right, and should have the authority, to select the subordinates

from whom the training, experience, and knowledge of the needs that qualify him or her to make the selections. . . ” ( p. 35).

In policy and policy interpretation, the VSBA clearly defines the role of the superintendent as the administrator. It also ascribes to the superintendent the role of technical-professional advisor on policy and programs, a role which could be interpreted as being responsible for initiating policy through agenda-setting activities. Policy cannot be made until it has been on the board agenda for discussion. The person who controls the agenda determines the issues that will come before the board. Because of the lay nature of school boards and the professional nature of the superintendency, the roles of the superintendent and school boards cannot be neatly circumscribed.

Role tensions. A 1994 national study, Prisoners of Time (National Education Commission on Time and Learning, 1994), asserts that recent analyses demonstrate that far too many boards function as managers instead of policymakers. According to Smith (1986), a major role of the contemporary superintendent is to develop a team with high morale and lead them in achieving the objectives developed by the board, administration, and faculty. The ideal division of roles is the difference between “what” and “how” (Smith, 1986).

Disagreement over roles is the norm, not the exception (Bart, 1980; Bewersdorf, 1980; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Martin, 1989; McCurdy, 1993). Most role conflicts relate to the type of policy under consideration (Alvey, 1985; Cressman, 1995; Davis, 1993; East, 1994; Sakal, 1977). Personnel issues (Alvey, 1985; Cressman, 1995; Davis, 1993; Goodman, Fulbright & Zimmerman, 1997; Grady & Bryant, 1991; Sakal, 1977) lead the conflicts. Another persistent conflict issue is business and financial management (East,

1994: Goodman, Fulbright & Zimmerman, 1997). An understanding of school finance appears as a critical factor in superintendent evaluation and retention (Chance, 1992: Yock, Keough, Underwood, & Fortune, 1990).

One study of role perceptions reported little disagreement between school boards and superintendents. Ray's (1986) study of the roles of school board and superintendents in South Carolina concluded that many decisions are perceived to be appropriately shared between the school board and the superintendent. However, Ray's (1986) conclusions of harmony between superintendents and their boards was the exception.

Role variations of school boards. School boards assume roles as a body of the whole and as individual school board members. Booth and Glaub (1978), Jennings (1975), McCarty and Ramsey (1971), and Tallerico (1988) describe school boards in terms of their role in relationship to their perceived role of the superintendent. Reference groups (Jennings, 1975) and personal and community values (Miron & Wimpelberg, 1992) may be major factors influencing roles adopted by school board members. Role perception will influence the initiation of action in the policy making process.

Role development of the superintendent. School boards in one form or another existed long before superintendents were needed. From 1789 until 1840, school boards were created for one purpose: to control the public school democratically. In 1840, a significant change occurred which was to influence the control of school boards in the future. The creation of the office of the superintendent of schools caused a significant change in the way school boards handled education. In turning over some of their duties to the superintendent, the school board was faced with the decision of relinquishing democratic control in favor of professional expertise. The result was inevitable. Due to



the increasing bureaucracy of school systems such as the school system of Boston, the position of superintendent became increasingly significant (Callahan, 1962).

The rise of industry in the early part of this century, gave credence to scientific management theories. Subsequently, educational professionals developed a scientific approach to school problem solving which evolved into a technical knowledge base. The technical expertise of the superintendent helped to remove education from politics and values considerations. The "ethos of neutral competency" (Iannaccone, 1977, p. 282), a concept which is essentially apolitical, meant that the superintendent was a professional who held the technical knowledge essential for policy-making decisions. According to Iannaccone (1977, p. 283), "... given the doctrine of neutral competency and the increased training of educators, it was inevitable that school administrators would acquire greater control over the policy system." Historically, superintendents and their staffs have controlled policy by controlling technical information (Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970).

Traditional role expectations of the superintendency maintained a technical emphasis and value neutrality. The superintendent was expected to be neutral in the sense that he or she could not be politically identifiable. Superintendents were to be "managers of virtue" (Tyack & Hansot, 1982), sharing common values and philosophies about instilling knowledge and skills in students. Finally, they were to be both professional leaders and internal managers (Wirt, 1988). The traditional role expectation is apolitical by definition, but that definition has not protected superintendents or held them above the political fray.

Superintendents have no expectation of job security. Although research on superintendents indicated that effective superintendents stay in a district over ten years

(Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997), superintendent turnover rates are generally high. Most superintendents in large cities stay only an average of three years (McCurdy, 1993). Those who leave cite confusion of roles between the school board and the superintendent as one of the greatest causes for resigning (Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997).

The superintendency has been described as a hot seat, a pressure cooker, and a highwire act (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). It is often described as unpleasant and an impossible job because all the struggles take place as media events. Because politics is defined as “the authoritative allocation of resources” (Dahl, 1961), the nature of the superintendency is to negotiate many different, conflicting, and often changing sets of expectations. Political decisions always alienate someone.

Schools in the 1990s have become the answer to broad social, economic, and ideological issues. Although improving student achievement ought to be the central focus of a school governance team (Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997), challenges to school reform are often based on economic, political, social, family, or religious values. Challengers show little interest in academic impacts and convert educational policy development and implementation into a “war zone” (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 33). In the 1990s, the superintendent is often caught in the middle of challenges to the public schools from groups that are very well organized and financed (Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Schlechty, 1992).

The single most important job of the superintendent from a practical point of view is getting along with the school board (Lutz & Merz, 1992). There are two sources for learning the superintendent’s role: the professional school and the community (Wirt &

Kirst, 1992). In this century, there has been significant shift in the role expectations of the superintendent from the traditional role of “neutral technician” to a power-sharing, active advocate of programs.

Influences upon the role of the superintendent. Wirt and Kirst (1992) noted that there are two dominant variables that shape a superintendent’s role: personal values and degree of conflict. According to Wirt and Kirst (1992), superintendents are guided by the degree of conflict in the community in pursuing their personal values. Different role behaviors can be predicted from observing the degree of value intensity of the superintendent viewed from the perspective of the degree of conflict in the community.

When conflict is high in the community and the superintendent’s value intensity related to the issue is also high, the role the superintendent assumes is called the “Besieged Professional” (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, p. 203). Actions typical of the “Besieged Professional” role are competing, accommodating, collaborating, or compromising. The outcome is either win or lose. Wirt and Kirst report that the frequency of this role is limited.

When community conflict is low and the superintendent’s value intensity is high, the role of the superintendent becomes the “Dominant Professional” (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, p. 203). His or her action is use of the professional management orientation. The outcome is a win and the frequency of this situation is unknown.

When community conflict is high and superintendent’s value intensity is low, the role of the “Compliant Implementer” emerges (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, p. 203). Under these conditions, the superintendent perceives no challenge to professional standards and does

not fear for his or her job security. The outcome is a win and the frequency of occurrence is unknown.

When community conflict is low and the superintendent's value intensity is also low, the role is described as "Overseer of Routines" (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, p. 203). The action of the superintendent is routine management. The outcome is a win and the frequency of this combination of value intensity and community conflict is extensive.

The new roles for superintendent result from acknowledging the place of conflict in determining educational goals in an open, free society. Wirt (1988) stated that professional power is always conditioned by political authority and that, in a democracy, power is ultimately what the majority defines it to be. "Controlling" superintendents who subscribe to the role of professional dominance (Tallerico, 1988) will be less successful in an era which values superintendents who collaborate frequently and with integrity (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, Chance, 1992; Grady & Bryant, 1991). The new model, the "political professional," means that superintendents must take on a political role to successfully promote professional goals. Ultimately, the superintendent will perform his or her role with a school board that is either elected or appointed.

Summary of roles of school boards and superintendents. The VSBA has interpreted the Code of Virginia to describe the powers and responsibilities of school boards and superintendents in the Commonwealth. In addition to policy, VSBA provides a manual for school board members which uses clear and direct language to describe the role of school boards as legislative and judicial but not administrative. Despite such definitions, roles are not static. They are dynamic, complex, and continuing interactions which change according to issues. The literature reveals that school boards develop

“personalities” which various researchers have categorized by types of initiatives, by reference (power source) groups, and by group behavior. Individual school board members also exhibit personal role definitions which can be examined and classified.

Since the beginning of the superintendency, technical information held by the superintendent has been valued. The doctrine of neutral competency was an attempt to keep the position technical and apolitical. Contemporary superintendents find they must be agents of influence, not mere purveyors of information. “Political professional” is an accurate descriptive phrase for the proactive, contemporary superintendent. Personal values and degree of conflict in the community are the major influences on the roles taken by superintendents in the course of their jobs.

#### Elected and Appointed School Boards

The selection of board members is an area that has received little or no attention as an area of study (Goldhammer, 1964). Subsequently, few research studies have been identified and those that have are dated (Godfrey, 1985; Hodges, 1967). Virginia has entered the debate much later than most. Zeigler and Jennings (1974) noted that very little attention has been given to the political process of governance. Advantages and disadvantages of both elected and appointed systems of selection have been debated (Hurwitz, 1972; the New Jersey School Boards Association, 1990; Tuttle, 1963).

When researchers compared performance, perceptions, and backgrounds of elected and appointed school board members, they found many differences. Among the virtues of elected boards that have been touted are the greater opportunity for non-elites to serve (Counts, 1927), the superior qualifications in terms of occupation and education (Stumpf & Miller, 1952), the greater likelihood that elected members are or will become

community leaders (Whalen, 1953), and the propensity toward democratic values as well as the ability to hold the confidence of the community (Reeves, 1954). Hurwitz (1972) stated that elected boards were usually more accountable.

Many of the same researchers also reached conclusions about appointed boards. Counts (1927) found that proprietors and professionals were more likely to be appointed to boards. Whalen (1953) indicated that appointed members were the joiners of clubs. Reeves (1954) suggested that appointed boards might have more qualified members since those members might not be inclined to mount an election campaign. Stelzer (1974) found a larger proportion of appointed members came from the upper class. The New Jersey School Boards Association (1990) noted that appointed system assures more qualified board members, but ultimately agreed with Hurwitz (1972) that neither method of selection guaranteed a good board.

Hurwitz (1972) developed rationales for both elected and appointed school boards. Hurwitz's assertions about appointed boards follow:

1. Appointed board members are of better caliber because leading citizens are willing to accept appointment but would never submit to the election process.
2. Appointment is considered an honor and elicits a feeling of civic responsibility.
3. Accountability can be placed on a visible appointing authority.
4. Members are more objective and less politically oriented.
5. Longer length of service provides greater continuity and consistent service.

Hurwitz made the following observations about elected boards:

1. Educational issues are dramatized by election and increase interest in the school.

2. Elected school boards are more fiscally responsible.
3. Elected boards are free to act and are not responsible to an appointing authority.
4. Elected boards are more responsive to the will of the people.
5. Elected boards are freer from municipal influence.

Whether a board member is elected or appointed, personal motivation for service is more important than the method of selection (Hurwitz, 1972; Tuttle, 1963). The candidate who qualified in order to accomplish a reform or to advance a personal agenda impairs the effective functioning of the board. Motives are more suspect when a candidate seeks the office than when the community, through its informal candidate selection methods, seeks a candidate. Selection method does not guarantee a good board. There is no correlation between successful boards and a given form of municipal government; there is a correlation between a good board and a positive, involved community (New Jersey School Boards Association, 1990).

Elected and appointed boards are neither good nor bad, successful or not successful. The context of the community and the role of the constituency have opened new lines of research. The changing political context and increasing participation of a diverse constituency also have charted an interesting course for school governance in Virginia since 1870.

#### History of School Boards in Virginia Since 1870

Morris and Sabato (1990) warned that anyone requiring a work covering the political history of Virginia since the Civil War will be disappointed. No such single work exists. The political history must be reconstructed from various works, legal decisions, election data, newspaper accounts, and state documents. The same holds true

for the history of public school governance in Virginia, a history which is inextricably tied to the Commonwealth's political history. No unbiased account exists as a single work.

In 1870, the Virginia legislature passed a law, The Public Free School Law, providing for appointment of local school trustees by the state Board of Education (Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, 1869-70, p. 408-409) [hereafter Acts, date]. The trustees were the precursors of modern day school board members. The Public Free School Law allowed the appointment of three citizens per school district in Virginia. This law was passed at the very end of the Reconstruction period of Virginia history.

The Readjusters. The 1870s brought depression and heavy state debt to Virginia. A political movement called the "Readjusters" began with farmers in the Piedmont and mountain counties. They wanted the tax burden "readjusted." The leader of the Readjusters was a former Confederate general, General William Mahone. Mahone expanded the state debt issue to include protective tariffs, civil rights, and federal aid to education. The Readjusters courted and attracted black voters away from the Republican Party (Moore, 1975; Salmon & Campbell, 1994).

During this period in the South, Democrats were the conservative party. When the conservatives came to power in 1877, they transferred the appointment power for school board members from the state school board to local school trustee electoral boards comprised of the county superintendent of schools, the county judge, and the attorney for the Commonwealth (Acts, 1876-77, pp. 9-10). This had a racially neutral effect because in counties with Readjuster or Republican judges, commonwealth attorneys, or school



superintendents. the local trustee electoral boards named board members sympathetic to black education. and in black majority counties. they named blacks as school trustees (Irby v. Fitz-Hugh. 1988).

In 1881. the Readjusters swept the elections. They retained control of the legislature. where the returns boosted black membership to 15. The Readjusters slashed the debt and reformed the state's tax structure, placing heavier burdens on railroads and other corporate interests. Readjuster money was poured into Virginia's struggling schools. Elementary education benefited. The number of black schools more than doubled, while their enrollment skyrocketed from 36.000 in 1879 to 91.000 in 1883.

The Readjusters also removed white teachers from black schools. Richard R. Farr. the state superintendent of public instruction, asserted his desire "to see every colored school . . . taught by a thoroughly competent colored teacher" (Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction, Twelfth Annual Report, 1882, p. 59). As a result. the total of black instructors rose dramatically. In 1881, the state employed 927 black teachers. Farr's efforts resulted in 1,664 black teachers by 1885 (Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction, Fifteenth Annual Report, 1885, p. 243). Of the total teacher increase from 1881 to 1885, black teachers accounted for 61% of the new hires. The Readjusters eliminated racial discrimination in teacher salaries, requiring county officials to provide equal pay for blacks and whites under penalty of law (Acts, 1881-82, p. 37). The Readjusters gave the public schools new life.

Although many of the Readjuster period policies increased black participation and general and educational welfare, the Readjusters were not a party that espoused equality of the races. Mahone and his lieutenants were white supremacists at heart who had no

intention of endangering the prevailing social order in Virginia. Although they expanded black schools, integrating the races was not a goal. The Richmond Weekly Whig,

September 21, 1883, explained: "Our party . . . encourages each race to develop its own sociology separately and apart from unlawful contamination with each other, but under a government which recognizes and protects the civil rights of all" (cited in Moore, 1975).

Major offices remained in white control. No black person rose above the rank of state senator during the Readjuster years.

The black freedmen were unwilling to accept the subordinate role the Readjusters offered. They had provided at least two-thirds of the votes for the Readjuster ticket in 1881, a demonstration of political power they were unwilling to let the Readjusters forget. Consequently, particularly in the eastern counties and in Southside Virginia, blacks took over many significant government jobs. A wave of civil rights activism swept Virginia cities in 1882-1883. Among other acts of militancy, Petersburg freedmen withdrew their children from the public schools to protest against inadequate facilities (Moore, 1975).

Increasingly, efforts by the Readjusters to placate the blacks alienated the white population. Rival political parties fanned the flames of discontent by projecting that the Readjuster policies would lead to integrating the schools and to mixed marriages. By 1883, the Readjusters were on the defensive. Racial tensions peaked in Danville, Virginia, resulting in the deaths of four blacks. That year, the "Funders," running on the white supremacy position, carried the state elections and gained control of both houses. The Readjuster period was over with the loss of the governor's mansion in 1885. Black votes had made the Readjuster movement successful; black success and militancy had

caused a backlash which resulted in collapse of the movement (Moore, 1975; Salmon & Campbell, 1994).

The conservative legislature of Virginia in 1884 gave the power to appoint school trustees to the General Assembly (Acts, 1883-1884, pp. 177-78) and the Readjuster governor approved it. However, the legislature restored the power to appoint trustees to local county officials in 1887 (Acts, 1887, pp. 305-06). No blacks were appointed as school board members between 1887 and 1901 (Irby v. Fitz-Hugh, 1988).

The Constitution of 1902. In 1901-1902, debates were held on the topic of the appointive system of school board selection at the Virginia Constitutional Convention. That convention drafted a new constitution designed to disenfranchise blacks and the poor. The effort to disenfranchise blacks was led by Democratic Party leaders from the eastern and southern portions of the state. They sought to deny the vote to blacks because they had experienced the power of the black voting in 1881. The allegiance blacks held for the Republican Party gave that party a formidable political power, but it was a power which could be easily destroyed by the removal of the black vote.

Public support for disenfranchisement was strong. Twelve Republican and 88 Democratic delegates were elected to the convention, a power distribution that assured the success of the disenfranchisement forces (Moore, 1975; Salmon & Campbell, 1994). The Constitution of 1902 created a dual system of education for blacks and whites (Department of Education, 1970).

Debates concerning school board selection methods were sponsored by the state education commission. Although the state education commission proposed an elective system, the convention rejected the proposal after several delegates warned that such a

method could lead to selection of blacks for school boards. The clear intent of the Constitution of 1901-1902 was to discriminate against blacks. It was not an intent cloaked in secrecy as the following excerpt from the Convention record attests:

Mr. Carter Glass: . . . the article of suffrage which the Convention will today adopt does not necessarily deprive a single white man of the ballot, but will inevitably cut from the existing electorate four-fifths of the negro voters. (Applause)

Mr. Pedigo: Will it not be done by fraud and discrimination?

Mr. Glass: By fraud, no; by discrimination, yes . . . Discrimination! Why, that is precisely what we propose; that, exactly is what this Convention was elected for-to discriminate to the very extremity of permissible action under the limitations of the Federal Constitution with a view to the elimination of every negro voter who can be gotten rid of, legally, without materially impairing the numerical strength of the white electorate.

(Report of the Proceedings and Debates, 1901-02, vol. 2, pp. 3076-77)

Even after purging the electorate of those considered undesirable, the General Assembly still did not adopt an elective school board scheme. In 1900 the electorate in Virginia numbered 264,240. In 1904 the electorate had dropped to 135,867 (Morris & Sabato, 1990). Control of the state had been returned to whites and, with the Constitutional imposition of a poll tax and a literacy test to limit suffrage, Virginia would remain under white control until the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the poll tax in 1966. In the interim, the Virginia electorate remained very small and very manageable (Key, 1990).

The Byrd era. With the electorate firmly under control. Virginia entered a long period of political quiescence dominated by the Byrd political organization. This period extended from 1893 until the death of Harry Byrd, Sr. in 1966 (Morris & Sabato, 1990). One party politics dominated and that party was the Democratic Party. Key (1990) noted that of all the American states, Virginia can lay claim to the “most thorough control by an oligarchy” (p. 38). The oligarchy owed its existence to competent management and to a restricted electorate. Political power was held by a small group of leaders who subverted democratic institutions and deprived most Virginians of a voice in their government.

Key (1990) reported that the Byrd organization pursued a negative policy on public services, dedicating “. . . its best efforts to the maintenance of low levels of public service. Yet it must be said that the organization gives good government: while the school system is inadequate, it is about as good as the money appropriated will buy” (p. 45).

During the Byrd era, three separate studies recommended that Virginia elect its school board members. Instead, the General assembly modified the existing structure. In 1926, the composition of the electoral commission was changed to three citizens all appointed by the local circuit judge. (Acts, 1926, Chap. 106, p. 104). It was changed again in the 1930s to allow for counties with county manager or county executive forms of government to have the school board appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Curiously, during the Byrd era, the General Assembly passed a general law which permitted “any county operating under the county manager plan . . . and in which county magisterial districts have been abolished . . . ” to elect its school board members if a majority approved this change by referendum (Acts, 1947, Chap. 61, pp. 113-116). Only Arlington County qualified under this provision. Although Arlington County voters

approved the change and began to elect 5-person boards. during its brief life from 1947 until 1956, a black person was never elected to serve (Irbv v. Fitz-Hugh, 1988).

May 17, 1954, the day the Supreme Court handed down its decision in Brown vs. Board of Education, marked the beginning of a major change in Virginia society. By the mid-1950s, post-war Virginia had entered a period of swift change, particularly as its urban population expanded and manufacturing began to drive the economy (Salmon & Campbell, 1994). Public education played an important role for parents and for those who sought to entice business and industry to the state. Racially segregated public education, as Virginians had forever known it, would be forced to become racially integrated because of a federal order. As important as attracting business and industry may have become, for many Virginians, maintaining the social status quo was even more important. Plans were made to resist the federal order.

“Massive Resistance” was the name Harry Byrd, Sr. gave to the monolithic, inflexible state policy designed to delay, permanently if possible, the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1954-1955 decisions ordering racial desegregation of the public schools. Massive Resistance is credited to Senator Byrd and James J. Kilpatrick, then editor of the Richmond News Leader. They prepared a plan to suspend or terminate public education wherever black children won court decisions requiring their admission to previously all-white schools (Irbv v. Fitz-Hugh, 1988; Latimer, 1988; Salmon and Campbell, 1994)

In 1956, following a lawsuit by the National Association of Colored People (NAACP), Arlington agreed to desegregate its school system in compliance with Brown v. Board of Education, 1954. Immediately thereafter, the Virginia General Assembly abolished Arlington’s elective school board system and returned all school boards to

appointed boards by law: "No school board shall be elected by popular vote in and for any county or city" (Acts, 1956, Chap. 591, pp.949-50).

In September, 1958, Front Royal schools closed. Charlottesville, Norfolk, and Prince Edward County followed. From September 1958 through January 1959, Massive Resistance kept thousands of children locked out of public schools that were closed by order of the governor. Governor J. Lindsay Almond broke with the Byrd organization and called the General Assembly into special session in January 1959. At that time, the Senate repealed the state's Massive Resistance legislation by a one-vote margin.

Changing federal legislation: changing Virginia schools. "Change" was a topic addressed by Albertis S. Harrison, Jr. in his gubernatorial inauguration speech of January 13, 1962.

Change is a constant in the stream of time. In times past, we have not expanded sufficiently our intellectual, cultural, and social horizons . . . We may have erred in some areas, by attempting to fit Twentieth Century problems to the Procrustean bed of Eighteenth Century solutions. . . . What Virginia needs is a renaissance of education and a quickened awareness of our changing world. (Latimer, 1988, p. 51)

Change was in the Virginia air in the 1960s. In 1962, the Supreme Court determined it was in their purview to challenge state legislative apportionments. For Virginia, this was a threat to the system which had given too much representation to rural residents and not enough representation to urban residents. Also in 1962, the poll tax, which had prevented so many Virginians from voting, was threatened by the ratification of the 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution. The 24th Amendment was

ratified in early 1964, in sufficient time to be in place for the 1964 elections. With the poll tax barrier removed and the literacy test set aside, black Virginians touched off waves of new voter registrations, black and white, that profoundly altered the old balances of voting power.

In 1961, with the poll tax in effect, 395,000 Virginians voted for governor. In 1969, with the poll tax gone, more than 905,000 Virginians voted for governor. Harry Byrd, Sr.'s death in 1966 marked the end of the Byrd machine as well as an end of an era of political stability for Virginia (Morris & Sabato, 1990).

In 1968-1969, Virginia created a Constitutional Revision Commission dedicated to restoring order to the state's educational system which had been harmed severely by the state's policy of Massive Resistance. The 1971 Constitution was the result. Article VIII, section 1, states: "The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall work to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained."

In addition to providing education for all of the Commonwealth's children, the Constitution of 1971 also eliminated the discretion previously held by localities to close schools, to cut off funding, and to take other retributive measures against blacks through the educational system. The Commonwealth's educational system was purged of the racial overtones and prejudices that had been defining characteristics (Salmon & Campbell, 1994). The decision to preserve to the legislature the authority to determine how school board members should be selected was not a racial issue. Members of the



Constitutional committee could not agree on which method was the best and tabled the question (Irbv v. Fitz-Hugh, 1988).

In 1970, counties that used school board election commissions were granted authority to change to a system, if the populace voting by referendum agreed, where the elected governing body appointed the school board members (Code of Virginia, section 22.1-41). In 1971, the General Assembly authorized all counties to create at-large school board seats. Evidence submitted in the Irbv trial suggested that these seats were often held by black members of school boards (Irbv v. Fitz-Hugh, 1988). In 1981, the General Assembly added a provision that allowed a county to return to the use of school board election commissions (Code of Virginia, section 22.1-45).

In 1985, the General Assembly provided for citizen response to school board nominations for appointment. The amendment required that a public hearing be held to receive the view of citizens within the school division on school board members who may be appointed by the county Board of Supervisors (Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-29.1). A 1987 amendment prohibited the appointment of anyone to the school board whose name had not been considered at a public hearing (Acts, 1987).

In 1987, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and black voters from particular counties, claiming to represent all black citizens of Virginia brought suit in federal court, challenging the state's method of school board selection. Irbv v. Fitz-Hugh, 1988, alleged that appointed boards violated black citizens' rights under the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the Voting Rights Act. The District Court judge, Richard L. Williams, Jr., held that (1) the appointive system of choosing school board members did not violate black citizens' Fourteenth or

Fifteenth Amendment rights, and (2) that the appointive system did not violate the Voting Rights Act (Irbv v. Fitz-Hugh, 1988).

Since 1976, bills to change the system from appointive to elective had been introduced regularly in the General Assembly. In 1984, a Subcommittee to study School Board Selection reported the arguments for and against the appointment of members. With amazing persistence, Delegate David G. Brickley, Democrat from Prince William County, introduced a bill proposing elected school boards each year from 1976 until the ESB Referendum was passed in 1992. His rationale was that elected school boards increased accountability: "What you'll have is more responsive and accountable school boards" ("More school boards to be chosen," 1995).

The social and economic change presaged by Albertis Harrison in 1962 came to pass in Virginia. By the end of the 1980s, blacks had won mayoral elections in most of Virginia's major cities. Every governor's cabinet since 1978 has included blacks and women. L. Douglas Wilder, elected governor in Virginia in 1989 by a very slim margin, was the first black state governor in the United States. Virginia, according to Sabato (in Morris & Sabato, 1990) has witnessed a lengthy period of urbanization and modernization. Massive social and political changes have altered the political landscape of the Old Dominion.

Summary of Virginia educational governance from 1870-1997. Opening the culture to greater citizen participation in government has been a long and painful process for Virginia. The history reveals that the traditional separation of the races was a dominant and driving value of the majority for almost a century beyond the Civil War. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century, sacred values have been challenged

by secular values. Homogeneous culture, once enforced by restricting suffrage, has yielded to the multiple voices of the state's heterogeneous culture. Diversity is no longer suppressed or ignored. Largely due to federal legislation, Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, the passage of the 24th Amendment, and the Voting Rights Act of 1966, the structural pluralism legalized and institutionalized in Virginia was struck down. Virginia opened governmental participation to all its citizens. Consequently, the Commonwealth has enlarged the scope of conflict in governance. In 1992, localities received the opportunity to extend the values conflict into school board selection. It remains to be seen whether enlarging the scope of conflict at the local school board level has had any impact on school board policy or the manner in which policy making is conducted.

The traditionally elite appointed boards in many localities have become elected boards. Elected boards and superintendents of elected boards have roles to play which, in Virginia, have no historical tradition outside of Arlington. The research reveals that conflict about respective roles is the source of much disagreement between boards and superintendents. There are no rules for roles. The traditional role of superintendents as "neutral technicians," who control information and therefore often control both the policy agenda as well as decisions may have to transform into a political role as superintendents begin to operate with elected school boards.

### Summary of Chapter 2

Dissatisfaction theory (Iannoccone & Lutz, 1970) predicts that changes in culture lead to changes in community values. Ultimately, these differing values assert themselves through citizen participation in democratic processes. Since school boards are the democratic mechanisms most readily available to citizen input, school boards are arenas

in which citizen dissatisfaction is likely to be observed. Because enlarging the scope of participation enlarges the scope of conflict (Iannoccone & Lutz, 1970, Schattschneider, 1975), increasing citizen participation in school governance will introduce new values and increase controversy.

After a long history of restricting citizen participation in government, Virginia, in the latter half of the twentieth century, has opened its democratic processes to full citizen participation. The ESB Referendum of 1992 represented the last barrier to full citizen participation to fall. Citizens in 102 localities have opted for greater participation in school governance through election of school board members. If the cultural basis of Dissatisfaction Theory as a critical element of change in values is correct, there should be a difference in the roles perceived by elected school board members compared to their appointed counterparts. It is predictable that elected school board members would evidence perceptions of greater control over policy issues than would appointed school board members in Virginia. In the new dance of school governance in Virginia, superintendents must be sensitive to the possibility that the expectations of who shall lead and who shall follow may be different.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### Design of the Study

This study was conducted in two phases. Phase I used quantitative analysis and was designed to determine if perceptions of roles in school governance differ as follows: (a) between elected and appointed school boards (board type); (b) between elected boards and the superintendents of those boards (position); (c) between appointed boards and their superintendents (position), and (d) between superintendents with elected boards and superintendents with appointed boards (board type). Phase II employed a qualitative method as a check on the survey results and to attach meaning to the findings of the first phase. Semi-structured interviews regarding the survey results with 12 people, 6 school board members, and 6 superintendents were designed to probe the human interactions between school board members and superintendents which are inherently incompletely described or understood by the survey method. The methodology and procedures used to investigate the hypotheses addressed in this study are summarized in this chapter.

#### Research Methods

Survey research. The following four null hypotheses state the dependent and independent variables that were tested through use of a survey:

1. There is no statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance held by types of school boards (elected or appointed) and positions (school board member or superintendent) for the issue area: Administration and Organization.

2. There is no statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance held by types of school boards (elected or appointed) and positions (school board member or superintendent) for the issue area: Employee and Pupil Personnel Services.

3. There is no statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance held by types of school boards (elected or appointed) and positions (school board member or superintendent) for the issue area: Business and Financial Management.

4. There is no statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance held by types of school boards (elected or appointed) and positions (school board member or superintendent) for the issue area: Curriculum and Instruction.

Semi-structured interview. Qualitative methods were employed to provide the richness of interpretation of human behavior that a survey alone cannot satisfy. Questions for the interview were derived from the survey data and structured along the lines of theory on which the study was designed: conceptions of democracy, role, and values. Participants will be asked to reflect upon the possible reasons for the role perceptions revealed by the survey data. The interaction between the interviewer and the participants helped to clarify motives and lead to a greater understanding of the role choices made by superintendents and school board members.

### Sample

In mid-1997, according to lists of elected and appointed school boards supplied by the VSBA, Virginia had 102 elected school boards and 34 appointed school boards. One of the appointed boards was the Correctional Board of Education. Because the

Correctional Board was not representative of a particular community, it was eliminated from the sample pool. Another appointed board, Allegheny Highlands, was specifically indicated by VSBA as a single board that represented localities that elect and appoint. The Allegheny Highlands board was eliminated from the sample pool. Similarly, Dahlgren Dependents and Quantico Dependents were eliminated from the pool of elected school boards because of their unique status as federal installations and because they were not listed in the Virginia Educational Directory, 1996-97.

To provide the necessary data for this study, all remaining school boards were arranged alphabetically. All the appointed boards were selected (N=31). From the remaining elected boards, every third school board was selected (N=33). Sixty-four school boards in Virginia and their superintendents represented the sample. The superintendent sample represented 47% of the population of superintendents in Virginia (Dahlgren and Quantico share a superintendent). The school board member sample represented approximately 33% of the population of school board members in Virginia. The lists of selected school boards follow:

#### Sample of Elected School Boards in Virginia

Amelia County	Augusta County
Bland County	Buchanan County
Campbell County	Charles City County
Chesterfield County	Colonial Heights City
Dickenson County	Fairfax County
Floyd County	Frederick County

Gloucester County	Greene County
Harrisonburg City	Highland County
King William County	Loudon County
Madison County	Mecklenburg County
Nelson County	Norton City
Pittsylvania County	Prince George County
Radford City	Roanoke County
Russell County	Smyth County
Staunton City	Sussex County
Warren County	West Point Town
Wythe County	

Sample of Appointed School Boards in Virginia

Accomack County	Amherst County
Bedford City	Brunswick County
Charlottesville City	Covington City
Cumberland County	Danville City
Essex County	Franklin City
Galax City	Greensville/Emporia
Hanover County	Hopewell City
Isle of Wight County	Lexington City
Lynchburg City	Manassas Park City



Martinsville City	Norfolk City
Northampton County	Northumberland County
Nottoway County	Orange County
Petersburg City	Poquoson City
Prince Edward City	Salem City
Southampton County City	Williamsburg
Winchester City	

Surveys were sent to individual school board members and all division superintendents (Appendix A). School board members received individual packets containing an endorsement letter from VSBA (Appendix B), a transmittal letter (Appendix C), a survey, and a stamped return envelope. The superintendents' packets contained an endorsement letter from Virginia Association of School Superintendents (Appendix B), a transmittal letter (Appendix C), a survey, and a stamped return envelope.

Confidentiality of response was maintained to improve the rate of return. The surveys required each respondent to identify his or her position (school board member or superintendent) and the selection process of the school division (elected or appointed). To counter a potential threat to the study of inexperience of recipients, a question relating to time served as a board member or superintendent appeared on the survey. Surveys of respondents who indicated fewer than six months in the position were not tallied in the calculations to test the four hypotheses. Incomplete surveys were tallied using zero values for omitted answers.

For the interview, the sample consisted of six superintendents and six school board members. This was a purposive sample consistent with Lincoln's (1985) advice to

“maximize the range of perspectives” in the context under study. Three superintendents were selected from localities with elected school boards and three from localities with appointed school boards. Likewise three school board members were selected from localities with elected school boards and three from localities with appointed school boards. Included in the sample were two elected school board members who had previously held their seats as appointed members.

### Generalizability

Results in this study may be generalized to school divisions in Virginia. Generalizing results to school divisions in the United States is not advised because elected Virginia school boards have a very limited history and may be in a “honeymoon” period. The literature indicated that processes of change in school governance through the election process require a minimum of ten years. At best, some elected school boards in Virginia have only five years of history. Therefore, results should be interpreted with caution. This study is descriptive of the current perceptions of roles of superintendents and school board members in the process of school governance in Virginia only and suffers from lack of generalizability to a broader sample.

### Instruments

Survey. Perception of the decision making role of school board members and superintendents in policy making was measured on a 27 item questionnaire designed for a national study by Alvey in 1985 and used with minor changes in 1995 by Cressman for a Pennsylvania study of school governance issues. Permission has been obtained from the author (Private conversation, 6/2/97).

Alvey (1985) developed the survey by gathering preliminary questions from board members and superintendents. Twenty of the issues were elicited using the Delphi technique with an expert panel of former superintendents. These issues were reviewed by the staff of the agency sponsoring the research. The American School Board Journal, and selected prominent school board members. Seven additional issues emerged. Alvey devised a Likert scale to indicate who in the respondent's school system actually decided particular issues. He determined that the issues could be grouped in four general areas: administration and organization of the school system, employee and pupil personnel services, business and financial management, and curriculum and instruction.

Cressman (1995) utilized Alvey's questionnaire in 1995 in his study of Pennsylvania superintendents and board members. Like Alvey, he evaluated face validity of the instrument through the use of an expert panel composed of a superintendent and school board not included in the sample. Alvey's (1985) and Cressman's (1995) questions for the panels regarding the instrument follow:

1. Are the directions to the survey stated and explained clearly?
2. Are the questions of sufficient interest and appeal to insure the respondent would be inclined to respond and complete it?
3. Are the questions relevant to current leadership responsibilities so as to elicit accurate and realistic responses?
4. Are the questions asked in a way that would not be embarrassing to the respondent?
5. Are the questions too restrictive, limited or narrow in scope?

6. Are the questions designed in a manner which would when taken as a whole answer the basic purpose of the study?

Both researchers found that there were no negative responses in regard to the philosophy or intent of the questionnaire or study.

Alvey (1985) placed questions in categories (Table 2) based on review of the literature and discussions with several present and former school board members and superintendents.

Table 2

Table of Specifications for Survey of Virginia School Board Member and Superintendent Perceptions of Responsibility for Leadership

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<b><u>Identified area</u></b>	<b><u>Item numbers</u></b>
Administration and Organization of the School Division	1, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 20, 24, 26
Employee and Pupil Personnel Services	3, 5, 9, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25
Business and Financial Management	2, 4, 11, 17, 27
Curriculum and Instruction	8, 10, 15, 18

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To establish reliability of the instrument, test-retest methodology was employed. Twenty school administrators were asked to take the survey. After three weeks, these same 20 administrators were asked to take the survey again. Scores from the two testings were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment test to establish reliability scores.

Questions were grouped into four subtests: Administration and Organization, Employee and Pupil Personnel Services, Business and Financial Management, and

Curriculum and Instruction. The Pearson correlations for the subtests are acceptable.

Pearson coefficients for the four subtests are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Pearson Coefficients of Test-Retest Reliability

<u>Policy area</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>α</u>
Administration & Organization	.82	17	.05
Employee & Pupil Personnel	.68	18	.05
Business & Financial Management	.57	13	.05
Curriculum & Instruction	.56	18	.05

Alvey's (1985) National Survey of School Board Members and Superintendents

was developed for a national sample. Subsequently, it required tailoring to school governance issues and language which are consistent with practice in Virginia. Additionally, Alvey collected information on school governance that revealed both respondents' perception of the "real" and the "ideal" states of decision making. This study was concerned only with perceptions of the status quo and has eliminated responses for the ideal. A question relating to collective bargaining which is not a factor in Virginia schools was changed to relate to determination of salary scale. All references to school "systems" have been changed to school "divisions." Cressman's language changes to the Alvey instrument, a result of his pilot study (1995), have been used in this study.

Interviews. A semi-structured interview was developed from the results of the survey to elicit responses to provide insights into individual role perceptions and to confirm or dispute the patterns observed in the survey results. In this instance, the method was used to probe and add meaning to quantitative data.

Although the questions were dependent on the survey results, the structure of the interview, which was conducted on the telephone, began with findings. Questions related to the findings probed for explanations from the perspective of the participant utilizing the theory bases of conceptions of democracy, role, and values. After probing the survey results, the questions asked the participant to reflect upon perceived differences in the ways school boards operate in the post-ESB Referendum period.

### General Procedures

Survey. The endorsement of the study from the VSBA and endorsement from Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) were obtained in order to assist in obtaining completion of the surveys from respondents. Mailing labels for all school board members in the sample were purchased from VSBA.

Each individual in the sample received mailed packets. Each packet contained a letter requesting participation, the questionnaire and instructions, and a self-addressed stamped business envelope.

Confidentiality was assured. However, surveys were coded to permit identification of respondents for the purpose of follow-up only. Survey codes on the instrument indicated the school division and respondent. The absence of receipt of any particular survey prompted a follow-up post-card after two weeks.

One-hundred twenty-three (123) appointed school board members and 106 elected board members responded. This represented a response by 61% of the total number of school board members in the sample. Twenty-six superintendents of appointed school boards and 28 superintendents of elected school boards responded. This response rate represented 84% of the sampled superintendent population.

Interview. Three participants from each participating group (elected school board members, superintendents of elected boards, appointed school board members, and superintendents of appointed boards) were solicited by telephone. Telephone interviewees were informed of the purpose of the interview and given the option to not participate. Participants were assured of confidentiality in the reporting of the interview data. Notes were taken during the interview.

#### Data Analysis

Survey. After the data were collected, descriptive statistics were calculated and reported for each of the four categories of decision making from the responses of the superintendents and board members. All hypotheses were analyzed using mean scores from the sample groups. Each of the null hypotheses were analyzed using 2 x 2 analysis of variance (ANOVA), testing each of the four dependent variables (the subtests) to determine if a statistically significant difference in the means ( $p < .05$ ) of each of the subtests existed for the respondent groups (the independent variables). Post hoc comparisons were planned as needed using the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference Test.

Interview. Telephone interviews were transcribed from notes and the content clustered and coded. Analyses of interview data occurred simultaneously with data

collection. Ongoing collection, coding, checking, probing, and verification of the data that emerged from the interviews provided a “constant comparative” method of analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1965). Coding and clustering of content categories were analyzed and compared to the results of the survey.

### Ethical Safeguards

Participation in both phases of this study was voluntary. No risks, discomforts, or stresses were anticipated for the participants. The participants in this study were fully informed of all aspects of the study by means of transmittal letters accompanying the survey instruments. Participants were informed in writing that only summary responses would be reported and that in no instances would individual school divisions or individual respondents be identified. Additionally, school divisions in the sample were mailed a copy of survey results at the conclusion of the study.



## Chapter 4

## Analysis of the Data

Phase I

Phase I of this study sought to measure and compare the role perceptions of both school board members and superintendents in determining policy using quantitative methods. The sample consisted of appointed and elected school board members and their superintendents in Virginia. Table 4 displays the response rates for the four groups.

Table 4

Sample Response Rate for the Survey of Virginia School Board Member and  
Superintendent Perceptions of Responsibility for Leadership

<u>Board Type</u>	<u>Positions</u>					
	<u>School Board Members</u>			<u>Superintendents</u>		
	<u>N-sample</u>	<u>N-response</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N-sample</u>	<u>N-response</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Appointed</u>	183	123	68	31	26	84
<u>Elected</u>	192	106	55	33	28	85
<u>Totals</u>	375	229	61	64	54	84

The instrument used was a 27-item questionnaire. Each item presented board members and superintendents with choices concerning their perception of role in decision making. The five possible responses were:

1. school board totally responsible.
2. school board primarily responsible.
3. equally responsible.
4. superintendent primarily responsible.
5. superintendent totally responsible.

Respondents were instructed to circle the answer that, in their perception, was the actual representation of the decision making process in their divisions.

Responses were scored as follows:

- 1 point for school board totally responsible,
- 2 points for school board primarily responsible,
- 3 points for equally responsible,
- 4 points for superintendent primarily responsible,
- 5 points for superintendent totally responsible.

Responses for each item were grouped according to the subtests for the policy issue areas: Administration and Organization, Employee and Pupil Personnel Services, Business and Financial Management, Curriculum and Instruction. Descriptive statistics were determined for each policy issue area for the four categories of respondents: appointed school board members, superintendents of appointed boards, elected school board members, and superintendents of elected school boards. The study sought to determine the interactions among subject groups by position (board member and superintendent) and by type of selection of school board (elected and appointed). The mean scores of the respondent groups were analyzed using 2 x 2 ANOVA procedures to test the stated null hypotheses.

### Administration and Organization

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each respondent group for the policy issue category of Administration and Organization. Table 5 presents the descriptive data for the unit means for the four groups. Unit means reveal where each respondent group falls on the 1 through 5 continuum, 1 representing the “school board totally responsible” extreme position and 5 representing the “superintendent totally responsible” extreme position on the survey scale.

Table 5

#### Unit Means for the Four Respondent Groups for Administration and Organization

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>
Appointed School Board	3.33	.46	123
Appointed Board Superintendent	3.53	.50	26
Elected School Board	3.20	.50	106
Elected Board-Superintendent	3.33	.51	28

All unit means for the four respondent groups fall between the “equally responsible” (3) position and the “superintendent primarily responsible” (4) position. To determine if the means were statistically significant, 2 x 2 ANOVA procedures were employed.

Null hypothesis one. There is no significant difference in the perception of role in school governance by board type (elected or appointed) or position (school board member or superintendent) for the category of policy issue: Administration and Organization.

The results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

ANOVA of Perception of Role for Administration & Organization for Board Types and Positions

<u>Source</u>		<u>Sum of squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Main Effects (Combined)		209.601	2	104.801	5.479	.005
	Board Type	122.220	1	122.220	6.390	.012
	Position	96.488	1	96.488	5.045	.025
2-way interactions						
	Board Type					
	Position	2.848	1	2.848	.149	.700
Model		212.449	3	70.816	3.703	.012
Residual		5336.187	279	19.126		
Total		5548.636	282	19.676		

As indicated in Table 6, the Administration subtest yielded significant  $F$  values for both board type and position. The Administration subtest for board type was  $F(1, 279) = 6.39, p < .01$ . The Administration and Organization subtest for position was  $F(1, 279) = 5.39, p < .02$  level. Given the two significant  $F$  values, the null hypothesis was rejected. There is a significant difference in how the two different types of school boards view their role in regard to Administration and Organization. There is also a significant difference in how the two different positions, school board members and superintendents, view their roles in regard to administration and organization of schools.

The analysis of variance indicated differences by position and board type. Appointed board members and elected board members perceived their role in school Administration and Organization differently than their respective superintendents. Superintendents of elected boards and superintendents of appointed boards differed significantly on perceptions of role regarding Administration and Organization. This was

also true of elected school board members and appointed school board members. The differences are presented in Figure 1.

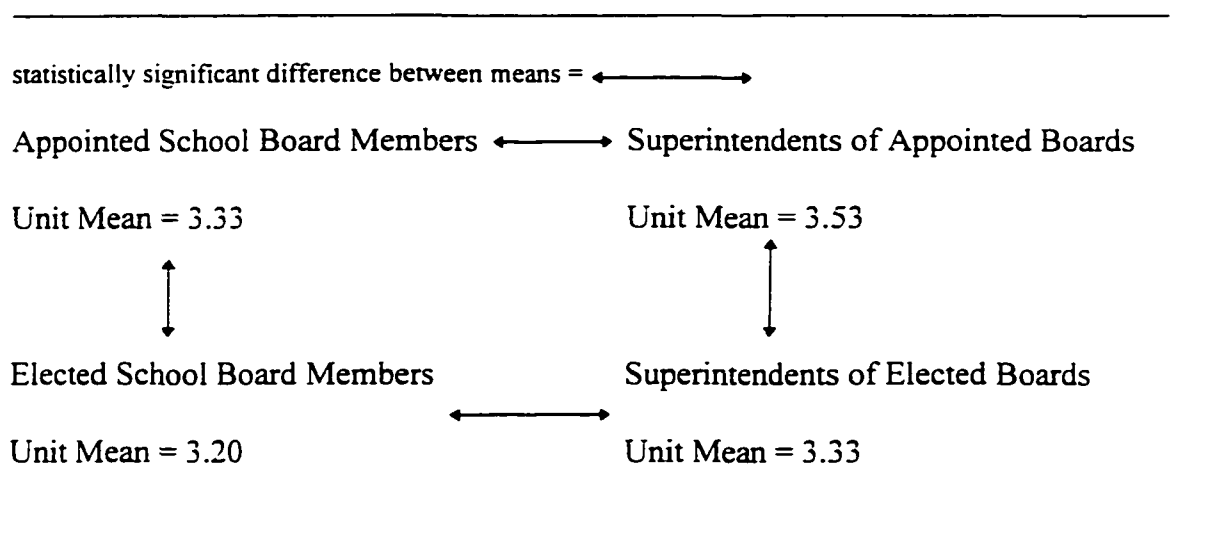


Figure 1: Differences between positions and board types as indicated by the ANOVA for the category of Administration and Organization displayed with unit means.

Although statistically significant differences exist between elected and appointed boards, superintendents of elected and appointed boards, and between the positions within each board type, the unit means cluster very closely. Statistically significant differences may not indicate practical differences in this case.

#### Employee and Pupil Personnel Services

Unit means and standard deviations were calculated for all respondent groups for the policy issue category: Employee and Pupil Personnel Services. The number of respondents remained the same for all four policy categories and has been reported previously. Unit means and standard deviations for Employee and Pupil Personnel Services are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Unit Means for the Four Respondent Groups for Employee and Pupil Personnel Services

<u>Groups</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>SD</u>
Appointed School Board Members	3.54	.91
Superintendents of Appointed Boards	3.62	.41
Elected School Board Members	3.39	.67
Superintendents of Elected Boards	3.51	.83

All unit means fall between 3 and 4 on the 5-point scale.

Null hypothesis two: Null hypothesis two was stated as follows: There is no statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance held by types of school boards (elected or appointed) and positions (school board member or superintendent) for the issue area: Employee and Pupil Personnel Services.

To test this null hypothesis, 2 x 2 ANOVA procedures were employed. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 8. There are no  $F$  values of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. There is no statistically significant difference in how elected and appointed boards or their superintendents view their roles in matters of employee and student personnel issues.

Business and Financial Management

Unit means and standard deviations were calculated for all respondent groups for

the policy issue category: Business and Financial Management. They are presented in Table 9.

Table 8

ANOVA of Perception of Role for Employee & Pupil Personnel Services for Board

Types and Positions

<u>Source</u>		<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Main Effects	(Combined)	147.421	2	73.710	1.489	.227
	Board Type	115.827	1	115.827	2.340	.127
	Position	37.048	1	37.048	.748	.388
2-way interactions	Board Type					
	Position	1.280	1	1.280	.026	.872
Model		148.701	3	49.567	1.001	.393
Residual		13811.080	279	49.502		
Total		13959.781	282	49.503		

Table 9

Unit Means for the Four Respondent Groups for Business and Financial Management

<u>Groups</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>SD</u>
Appointed School Board Members	3.18	1.05
Superintendents of Appointed Boards	3.24	.76
Elected School Board Members	3.06	.80
Superintendents of Elected Boards	3.13	.72

All unit means fall between 3 and 4 on the 5-point response scale.

Null hypothesis three. There is no statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance held by types of school boards (elected or

appointed) and positions (school board member or superintendent) for the issue area:

Business and Financial Management.

To test this null hypothesis 2 x 2 ANOVA procedures were used. Table 10 presents the test results.

Table 10

ANOVA of Perception of Role for Business and Financial Management for Board Types and Positions

		<u>Sum of</u> <u>Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean</u> <u>Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Main Effects	Source (Combined)	27.336	2	13.668	.667	.514
	Board Type	23.945	1	23.945	1.169	.281
	Position	4.219	1	4.219	.206	.650
2-way interactions	Board Type Position	1.89	1	1.893	.001	.976
Model		27.355	3	9.118	.445	.721
Residual		5714.023	279	20.480		
Total		5741.378	282	20.359		

As indicated in Table 10, there were no significant values of F for the category of Business and Financial Management. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. There is no significant difference in the roles taken either by position or board type in matters pertaining to Business and Financial Management.

Curriculum and Instruction

Unit means and standard deviations were calculated for all respondent groups for the policy issue category: Curriculum and Instruction. They are presented in Table 11. All unit means fall between 3 and 4 on the 5-point scale.



Table 11

Unit Means for the Four Respondent Groups for Curriculum and Instruction

<u>Groups</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>SD</u>
Appointed School Board Members	3.57	.54
Superintendents of Appointed Boards	3.42	.63
Elected School Board Members	3.34	.70
Superintendents of Elected Boards	3.18	.78

Null hypothesis four. There is no statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the perception of role in school governance held by types of school boards (elected or appointed) and positions (school board member or superintendent) for the issue area: Curriculum and Instruction.

Table 12 presents the data gathered from the 2 x 2 ANOVA.

Table 12

ANOVA of Perception of Role for Curriculum and Instruction for Board Types and Positions

		<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Main Effects	Source (Combined)	80.231	2	40.115	6.245	.002
	Board Type	60.829	1	60.829	9.469	.002
	Position	16.476	1	16.476	2.565	.110
2-way interactions	Board Type Position	3.936	1	13.396	.006	.938
Model		80.270	3	26.757	4.165	.007
Residual		1792.232	279	6.424		
Total		1872.502	282	6.640		

In Table 12, the analysis indicated a significant difference in board type for the category of Curriculum and Instruction. There was a significant main effect for board type,  $F(1, 279) = 9.469, p < .002$ . This value for board type indicated a difference between superintendents of elected and appointed boards and a difference between elected and appointed board members in their role perceptions in Curriculum and Instruction issues. The null hypothesis was rejected for board type and accepted for position.

The arrows in Figure 2 indicate the statistically significant differences found between positions for the policy issue area: Curriculum and Instruction.

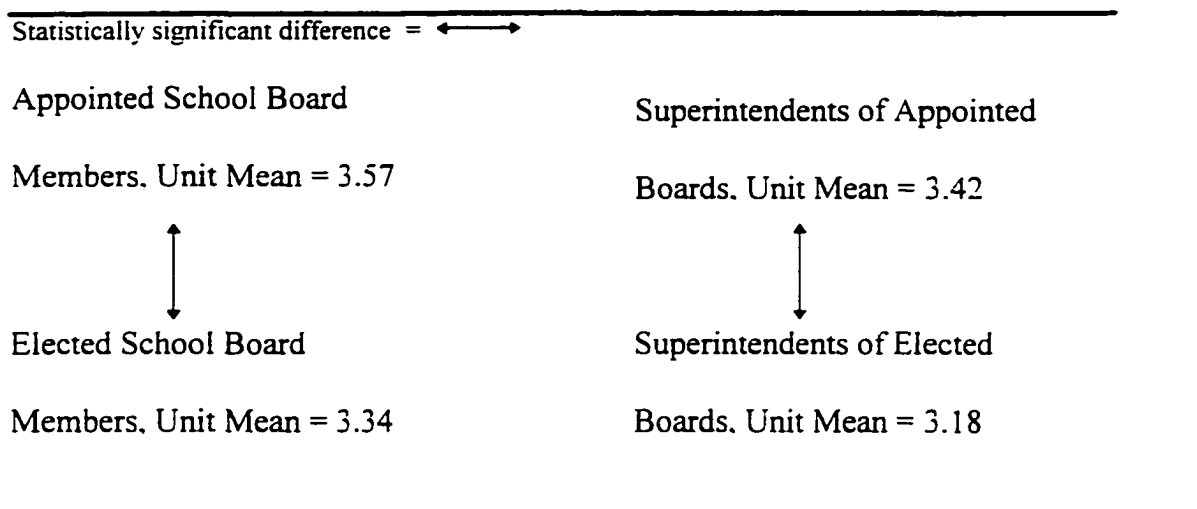


Figure 2. Differences between board types as indicated by the ANOVA for the category of Curriculum and Instruction displayed with unit means.

Although all unit means fall between 3 and 4 on the 5-point scale for this issue area, it differs from the preceding four issue areas in the order in which the groups appear. In this case, superintendents of elected boards took the position closest to “equally

responsible.” a position held in all previous issue areas by elected school board members. The position closest to “superintendent primarily responsible” was taken by appointed school board members. For previous issue areas, that position was held by superintendents of appointed boards. It appears that Curriculum and Instruction is an issue area in which the groups of respondents perceive their respective roles differently than they do the other three issue areas.

### Summary of Data Analysis

The data revealed significant differences in role perceptions of superintendents of elected and appointed school boards as well as between elected and appointed school board members themselves in the policy issue areas of Administration and Organization and Curriculum and Instruction. It also revealed a significant difference in the perception of roles of appointed school board members and their superintendents and elected school board members and their superintendents in the area of Administration and Organization. All unit means for all respondent groups for the four policy issue areas tested fell between 3 and 4 on the 5-point scale. This clustering of responses suggests that statistically significant differences may not have practical significance.

### Phase II

Telephone interviews were obtained from three elected school board members, three appointed school board members, three superintendents of elected boards, and three superintendents of appointed boards. Board members were chosen for the interview from rural, urban, and suburban divisions and were members who were elected, elected but previously appointed, appointed but serving on an elected board, and appointed. Two

members were women and four were men. Superintendents were also chosen from rural, urban, and suburban areas. Two superintendents were women.

Survey results were shared with each interviewee and questions were permitted. A semi-structured question format was used beginning with asking the interviewee to reflect on possible reasons why the category of Administration and Organization revealed significantly different perceptions by both superintendents and school board members of both elected and appointed boards. A second question related to the differences found in the data regarding Curriculum and Instruction. Prompts such as “why?” and “please elaborate on that” were used. Interviewees were asked to reflect on the diversity of their communities, controversy, motivations for serving on school boards, and accountability. If the interviewee was a superintendent of an elected board, they were asked if they had consciously adjusted their style. For interviewees from school divisions that had rejected the ESB Referendum, a question was posed to encourage them to explain why the ESB Referendum failed. Respondents were particularly eager to discuss their perceptions of the differences in accountability and motivations of the two different types of board members. Superintendents were, for the most part, willing to discuss the controversies, often offering cases in point.

The assumption was that the interview would assist in explaining the observed differences and lead to increased understanding of the underlying meanings supporting the data. Interview notes were transcribed faithfully. Data were coded into eight categories: school board characteristics, motivations of school board members, diversity, concerns, accountability, trust/information, controversy, and perceptions of

superintendents. After the data were grouped in categories, they were reduced into summaries.

The purpose of this section is to merge and display the issues revealed in the twelve interviews. This synthesis and conversion of complex data to a series of broad categories and “x’s” is admittedly an oversimplification and can be misleading. The representation of the data (Table 13) is offered here along with categorical summaries to impart a sense of the emerging themes and patterns. The discussion that follows in Chapter 5 allows the emergent patterns to be viewed in the context of dynamic board and superintendent interaction and community values and to add meaning to the survey findings.

School board characteristics. One appointed member viewed the elected board as bringing the superintendent-board relationship into balance. Two elected school board members describe their boards as involved and responsive. Four superintendents, two elected and two appointed, noted that “meddling” or “encroachment” was characteristic of elected boards. Two superintendents of elected boards and two school board members, one elected and another appointed, used the word “fragmented” when describing elected school boards.

One superintendent of an appointed board described a “fragmented” appointed board. Two superintendents of elected boards and one elected school board member described appointed boards as “committed” and “supportive.”

Motivation to serve. Two appointed board members, one elected board member, and one superintendent of an appointed board stated that elected school board members

Table 13

Indicators of Issue Areas in Interviews with Superintendents and School Board Members.

	Appointed Sups.			Elected Sups.			Appointed SBMs			Elected SBMs		
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	SB1	SB2	SB3	SB4	SB5	Sb6
Characteristics of Boards	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Motivation to Serve on Board		x		x		x	x	x		x		
Diversity		x		x		x		x	x			x
Accountability	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Concerns	x				x		x	x		x		x
Trust/Information	x	x			x	x		x	x		x	
Controversy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Perception of Superintendent							x		x			x

Note: S = superintendent; SB= school board member

serve on school boards as a spring-board for their higher political aspirations. Two superintendents of elected boards and one elected school board member stated their belief that people serve to get involved.

Diversity. Diversity within the community proved to be a factor reported by the appointed school board members of the two surveyed school divisions that had rejected the ESB Referendum. Both members reported communities with very little population turnover. One school board member reported high racial diversity within his community but noted that the community has been stable for generations and controversy is minimal. A very experienced superintendent of an appointed board noted the increasing presence of well-educated, mobile, corporate “yuppies” on school boards and related the changing

community values to the loss of the “old boy system.” One superintendent hypothesized that breaking the data down demographically would present a clearer picture of diverse communities and their school boards. Another superintendent mused that low controversy in his division was because of an unstable but remarkably homogeneous population in his community. An elected school board member predicted that increasing diversity within Virginia would result in increased numbers of elected school boards, controversy on those boards, and ultimately taxing authority.

Accountability. The source of power of board members is the appointing or electoral body. Accountability for appointed boards was to the school division and its children, according to two superintendents, one serving an elected board, the other serving an appointed board. For elected boards, accountability is to their constituency, according to four interviewed school board members and four superintendents. Accountability determines a school board member’s concerns and behavior. Board members who increased their salaries, whether appointed or elected, also increased their visibility in school board work so there would be no question of their integrity. Not only do they work hard, but they have a need to be seen as working hard. Accountability factors appear to be both external and internal to the school board member.

Concerns. Concerns regarding single-issue candidates was a recurrent theme (six mentions) in the interviews. The “religious right” was the only group cited by name as having a definite school board agenda. Single-issue candidates were seen as capable of polarizing a community and bringing board work to a stop. Two elected and two appointed school board members, one superintendent of an elected board, and one

superintendent of an appointed board noted their relief that their boards have not suffered from the polarization that single-issue candidates have brought to other school boards.

Trust and information. Trust of the superintendent, particularly the trust to deliver all the information believed necessary to making a good decision, was a consistent theme among elected (2) and appointed (2) school board members. The appointed board members noted a high degree of trust in their superintendent. Two elected superintendents acknowledged the high need for information of elected school board members. Two appointed superintendents spoke to their need to keep board members informed. One elected school board member noted his need to be kept informed by the superintendent as well as to gather information on his own.

Another type of trust addressed was trust in technical expertise of the superintendent. Two appointed board members noted that superintendents were hired to do a job and needed to be allowed to do it. A question about school board members' trust in technical expertise was raised by a superintendent of an elected board whose board chose a teacher group's recommendations on curriculum over that of an assistant superintendent. Another superintendent noted that teachers' power increased with elected boards only as a result of their superior voting numbers when compared to the number of administrators.

Controversy. Controversy was discussed from two different perspectives. In general, school board members discussed controversy within their communities; superintendents and one board member discussed controversy between themselves and their boards. Rural and suburban board members hypothesized that the occurrence of single-issue candidates and of resultant controversy would be more prevalent in the cities



where greater diversity exists. Two elected board members noted that controversy was so low that the populace could not really differentiate the candidates on issues. For superintendents, all reported that controversy arose from role confusion and resulting encroachment on the superintendents' responsibilities.

Perception of superintendents. One elected school board member stated that superintendents should be collaborative and sensitive to their informational needs. This board member stated that less authoritarian superintendents are needed to work with elected boards. Two appointed school board members cited the need for technical expertise in a superintendent. They voiced a belief that the job of the board is to make policy and allow the superintendent to administer the policy.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate perception of roles held by elected and appointed school board members and their superintendents in Virginia. Four areas of policy-making activity provided the context for revealing role perceptions. The four issue areas, Administration and Organization, Business and Financial Management, Employee and Pupil Personnel Services, and Curriculum and Instruction, were included in a 27-item survey which was sent to 64 superintendents and their school board members. Eighty-four percent of the sampled superintendent population responded, and 61% of the sampled school board membership responded. Four null hypotheses were formulated to test for the differences in perceptions of roles of board members and superintendents. The research was conducted in two phases. Phase I collected and analyzed survey data. Phase II collected and applied interview data to further validate the data analysis and to apply meaning to the findings.

A thorough review of the literature was undertaken to examine the history of public education in Virginia with particular attention to its colonial and post-Civil War periods in order to understand its evolution in this state. Theory (Schattschneider, 1975; Iannoccone & Lutz, 1970) suggested that increasing diversity and increased political participation within Virginia would account for political changes in the governance of public schools.

Appointed boards may be seen as vestiges of a time in Virginia when the political process was closed to those who were poor or non-white, when a political machine

carefully orchestrated state and local agendas, when structural pluralism within communities was cultivated and protected, and when sacred values were unchallenged. In contrast, elected school boards in Virginia have been proposed as offering places at the “political table” to everyone, regardless of race, family name, or party affiliation. In communities that have adopted elected school boards, Virginians have increased the “scope of the conflict” (Schattschneider, 1975) by opening the door to participation and debate.

### Discussion

In Chapter 1, it was noted that this study was neither intended nor designed to test Dissatisfaction Theory per se. Time is a critical factor in a test of Dissatisfaction Theory. Virginia’s experience with broader participation in school governance is in its early stages. Given the changes in political participation that educational governance in Virginia has experienced in 102 school divisions, this study sought to determine if elected and appointed school board members and their superintendents operate differently from each other.

The culture has truly changed and participation has increased. If Dissatisfaction Theory is correct, change in school board values are predictable in Virginia (Iannoccone, 1977; Iannoccone and Lutz, 1970). School board members’ roles will be shaped to some degree by their perception of community expectation and their concepts of democracy. New sources of power will influence and determine roles for elected school board members and impact on their superintendents (Zeigler & Jennings, 1974).

Virginia’s dramatic cultural change and the subsequent increase in citizen participation in school governance suggested that Dissatisfaction Theory’s cultural

component would be a probable explanation for expected differences in the way elected and appointed school board members perceive their roles. It was anticipated that elected school boards would perceive their roles as more responsive to citizens and thus evidence more responsibility for school governance in the survey data than their appointed counterparts. A cultural explanation of the findings in this study is confounded by two factors in the data: the clustering of unit means from the survey data and the high level of involvement of appointed school board members revealed in the interview data. Although significant statistical differences in two policy areas and a consistent pattern of group responses in three of the four policy areas lend support to the cultural theory explanation, the relatively close clustering of response means for all groups indicates that true differences may be minor. Additionally, the theory of cultural change fails to adequately explain the involvement of appointed school board members.

Survey data. Survey data revealed significant statistical differences in two of the four policy areas tested. Differences were confirmed by position and by board type for the issue area of Administration and Organization and by board type for Curriculum and Instruction. However, unit means for all four issue areas for each of the four respondent groups fall between 3, the “equally responsible” position and 4, the “superintendent primarily responsible” position. The question of practical differences and theory applicability arises from this clustering of responses.

The first issue area, Administration and Organization, had statistically significant differences by board type and by position. The unit means for each of the four respondent groups are presented in Figure 3.

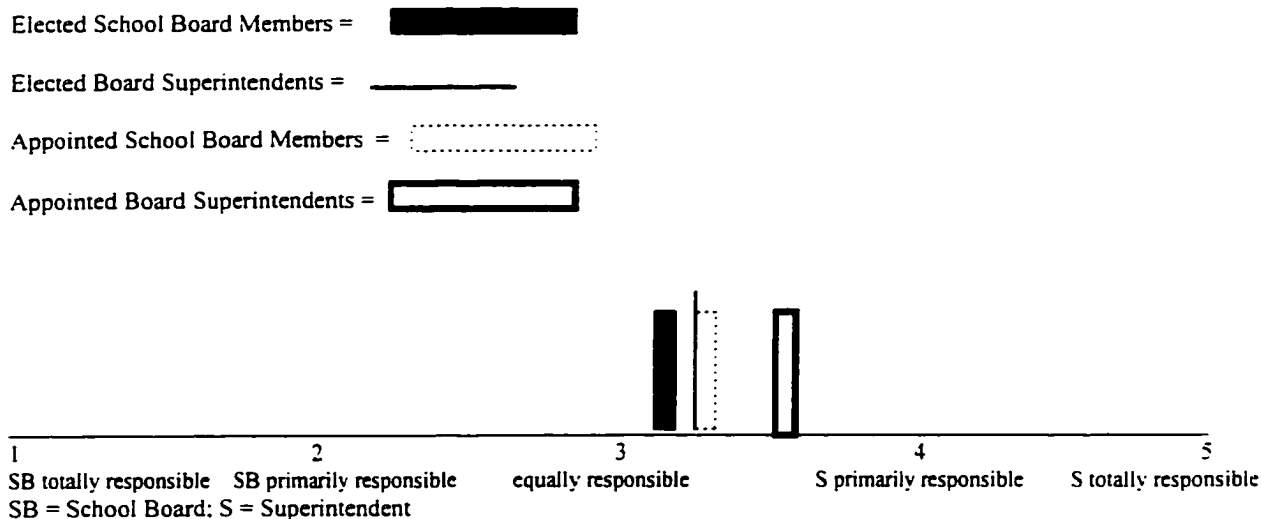


Figure 3. Visual representation of unit means from survey for Administration and Organization

Both appointed school board members and elected school board members perceived their roles differently than their respective superintendents. Additionally, statistically significant differences existed between the two types of school board members and between the superintendents of elected boards and the superintendents of appointed boards. Both superintendents of elected boards and superintendents of appointed boards perceived themselves to have more influence over Administration and Organization issues than their boards believed them to have. Of the four groups, elected school board members perceived most strongly that decisions in this area are shared equally. Cressman's (1995) study and Alvey's (1985) study indicated that superintendents were more willing to share responsibility with their boards in this decision-making area.

The second issue area was Employee and Pupil Personnel. The analysis revealed no statistically significant difference in the perception of role in school governance by

board type (elected or appointed) or position (school board member or superintendent) for this category of policy issue. The null hypothesis was not rejected. This finding is inconsistent with several previous studies (Alvey, 1985; Cressman, 1995; Godfrey, 1984; Grady and Bryant, 1990); however, it was consistent with Davis' study (1993) of roles of school boards and superintendents in Georgia.

Unit means on the 5-point survey scale for Personnel for all four respondent groups are presented in Figure 4.

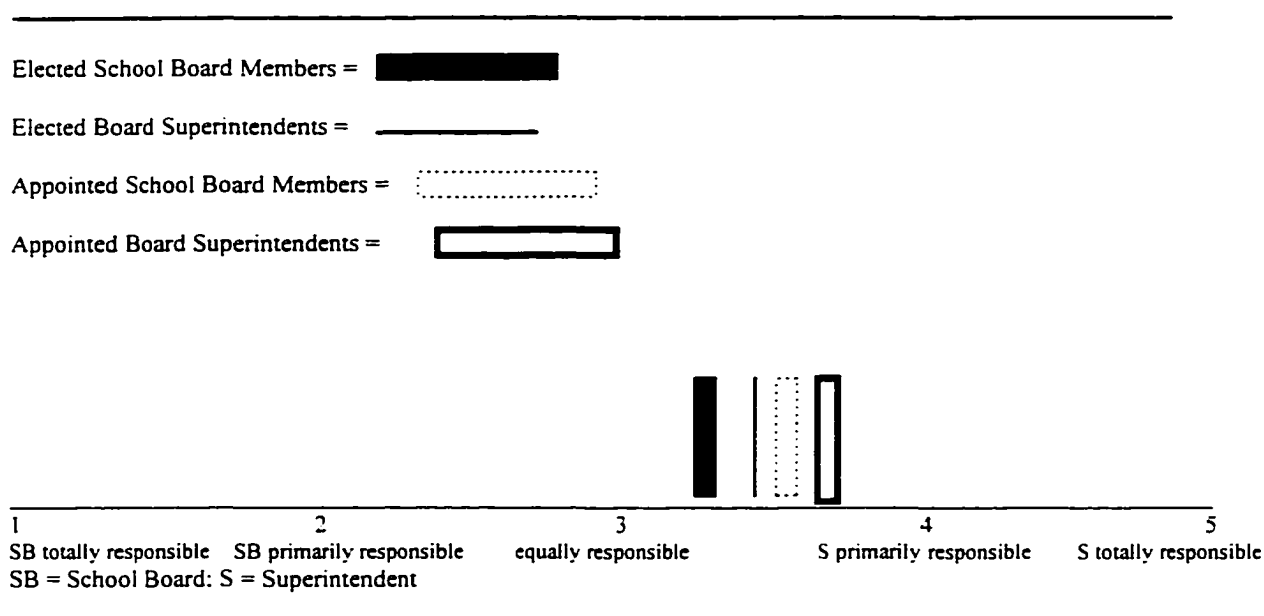


Figure 4. Visual representation of unit means from survey for Personnel

Although there are no statistical differences among the respondents, it should be noted that, consistent with the pattern in Administration and Organization responses, superintendents of appointed boards tended toward the “superintendent primarily responsible” position and elected school board members held the unit mean closest to the “equally responsible” position. The relative positions of these two groups were

statistically insignificant and practically insignificant as well. However, their positions relative to each other might be suggestive of a professional-dominant orientation for the superintendents of appointed boards and a responsivist position for elected school board members. These relative positions are supported by the theory of cultural change which supports Dissatisfaction Theory.

Godfrey's 1984 study of elected and appointed school boards in New Jersey found a significant difference in how the groups defined their roles in regard to personnel issues. She also found that superintendents of appointed boards showed greater perceptions of responsibility than the other groups. Although not significantly different, the unit means in this 1997 study in Virginia revealed similar trends regarding superintendents of appointed boards in regard to the issue area of personnel.

The third issue area was Business and Financial Management. No significant difference in role perceptions existed among elected and appointed school boards and their superintendents in this area. This null hypothesis was accepted. This finding differs from several studies: Alvey, 1985; Cressman, 1995; East, 1994. Godfrey (1984), however, also did not find significant differences in perception of role for this category. Unit means are presented graphically in Figure 5.

This clustering of unit means in the Business issue area is closest of all the four issue areas examined to the "equally responsible" position. Financial management of the schools would appear to be generally perceived as a shared responsibility by all four groups surveyed. Once again, the relative positions of the respondent groups are consistent with the theory of cultural change: elected school board members are closest to the "equally responsible" position and superintendents of appointed boards are closest to

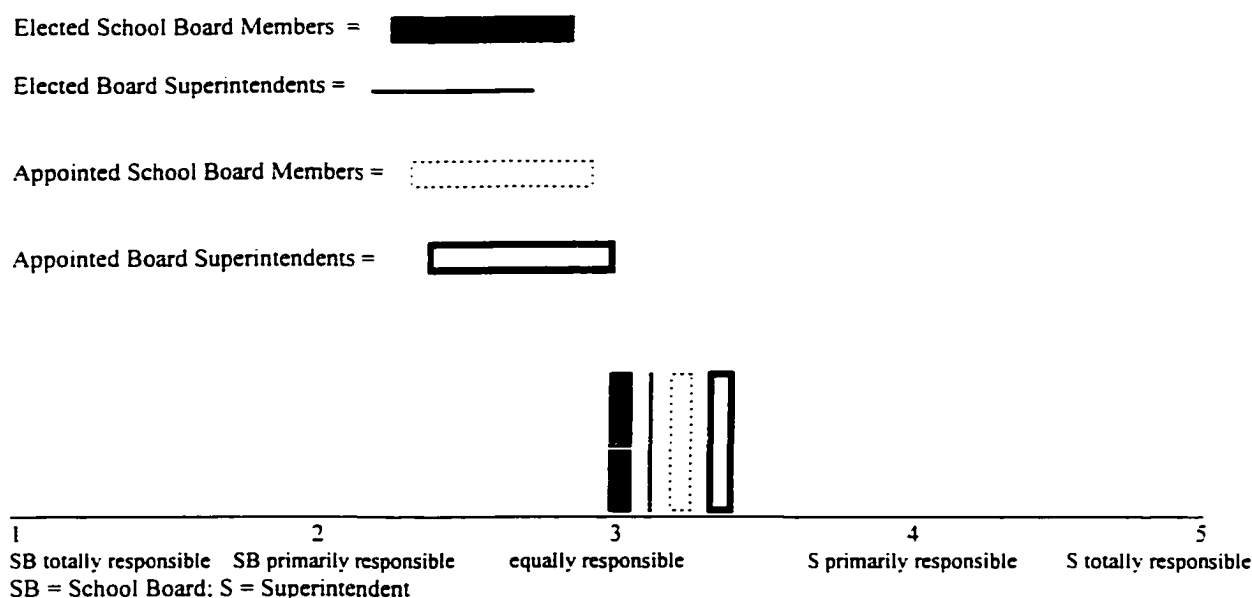


Figure 5. Visual representation of unit means for Business

the “superintendent primarily responsible” position.

The last issue area was Curriculum and Instruction. A statistically significant difference in role perceptions existed for the board types but not between positions for this issue area. Significant differences were found between the superintendents of elected and appointed boards and between the elected and appointed boards. Superintendents of elected boards perceived their role as sharing equally on this issue whereas superintendents of appointed boards were less willing to share in this area. Least willing to share equally in responsibility for this area were appointed boards who felt responsibility should lie primarily with the superintendent. This data indicated a disruption of the pattern observed in the other three issue areas in which the superintendents of appointed boards held the position closest to “superintendent primarily responsible,” a position reflecting a professional-dominance orientation. For this issue



area, that position belonged to appointed school boards and indicated a desire for the superintendent to lead in this issue area. Figure 6 presents the information visually.

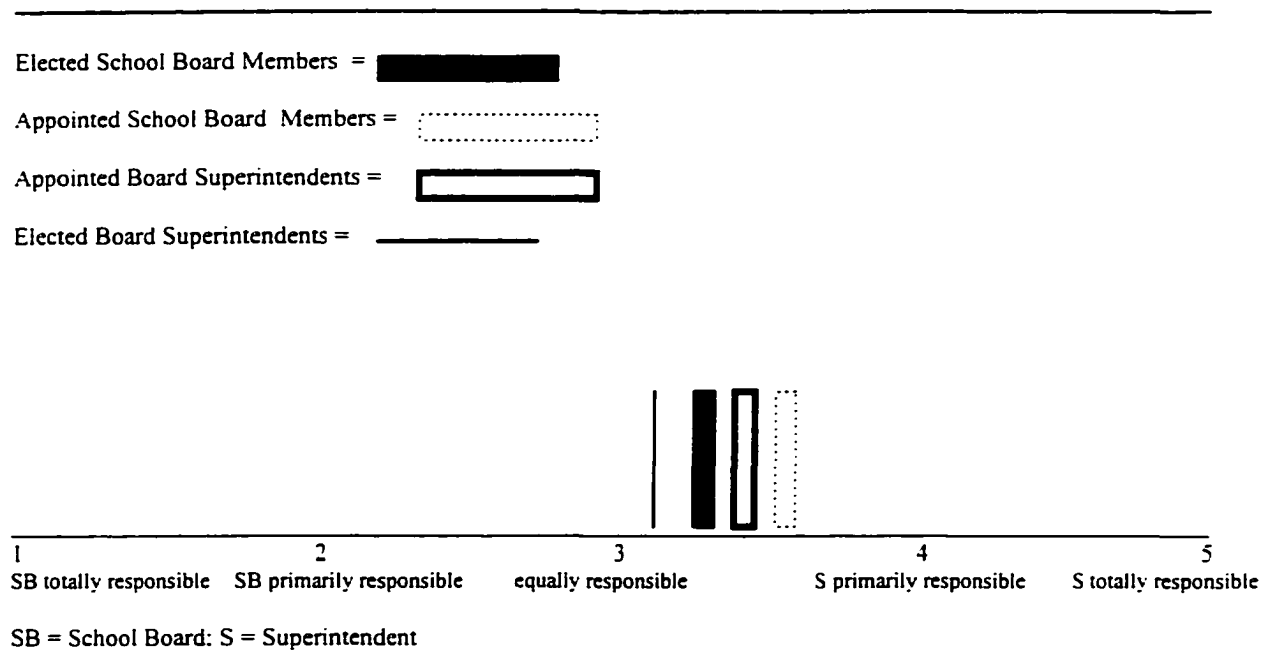


Figure 6. Visual representation of unit means for Curriculum and Instruction

Godfrey (1984) found significant differences in instructional program between elected school boards in New Jersey and their superintendents and a similar pattern between appointed boards and their superintendents. Her findings represented a difference in positions not in board type. Also, in contrast to this Virginia study, Godfrey reported New Jersey superintendents for both types of boards perceived greater influence for themselves than their boards felt they had. This finding is reversed in the present study. Other researchers have also found significant differences in perception of role between school board members and their superintendents in the category of Curriculum and Instruction (Cressman, 1995; East, 1994). The direction of the difference indicated in

this study is consistent with Alvey's conclusions in 1984: superintendents appear to be more willing than their boards to share responsibility for curriculum and instruction.

Significant statistical differences in two of the four examined policy decision areas indicated that elected and appointed school boards in Virginia may be operating differently as predicted by political theorists (Iannoccone & Lutz, 1970; Schattschneider, 1975). Roles were perceived differently by superintendents and school board members in Administration and Organization and Curriculum and Instruction. Statistically significant differences, however, do not appear to have practical or operational meaning in the day to day workings of school boards in Virginia. Positioning of the unit means for all issue areas except Curriculum and Instruction display a pattern consistent with cultural change, but the clustering in the pattern is too close to confirm a cultural theory of change at work. In this instance, statistically significant differences are not meaningful.

Interview data. As a further check on survey data, a small number of interviews were performed with members of all four surveyed groups. Follow-up interviews with school board members and superintendents were intended to capture beliefs and values and interpretations of behavior to provide underlying meaning and ultimately to lead to conceptual frameworks to better understand the phenomena at work in Virginia school divisions (Glaser & Strauss, 1965; Owens 1982).

Interview data revealed that the theory of cultural change provides an inadequate explanation for the activity and involvement of appointed school boards. Interviews with six board members and six superintendents revealed some of the dynamics of the superintendent-board member interaction. Critical information was embedded in their descriptions of each other, their individual reflections on their communities, their

conceptions of democracy expressed through statements of commitment and accountability, their reflections on the motivations of counterparts, and their stated and implied values. Because policy problems are socially constructed, their thoughts provide a wealth of explanatory material for analysis in terms of two sociopolitical models: the negotiated system of agenda building (Cobb & Elder, 1983) and Blau's (1986) concept of social exchange and negotiated human interaction. These two conceptual frameworks were first applied to school board issues by Tallerico (1988) in her descriptive study of superintendent-school board relationships.

Agenda-building. The agenda-building paradigm is not a theory but a model for understanding pre-decisional social processes which shape action at the policy-making stage. It defines "agenda" as the systemic agenda, not the institutional, literal agenda a school board meeting would follow. The systemic agenda is much broader because it includes all the issues ever considered for inclusion on the institutional agenda and is concerned with the processes of reaching that point (Cobb & Elder, 1983).

Negotiation and exchange. Blau's (1986) concepts of negotiation and exchange are inherent in the process of role. In social interactions, both parties must have the expectation of benefit. Each party will possess different resources and sanctions which are essentially the currency of bargaining. Bargaining is purposeful; it is never undertaken without the expectation of return. There is always expected benefit and cost in a social interaction. These two sociopolitical models, agenda-building and negotiation and exchange, are valuable in conceptually integrating the meanings attached to conceptions of democracy, role, and values supplied by the interviewees and applying them to the survey results.

Application of the models. The information provided from the interviews suggested that local school governance, particularly in the issue area of Administration and Organization, is an evolving, dynamic, democratic social process of negotiated agenda-building. The day-to-day operation of the school divisions appeared to be the point of entry for expression of citizen concerns. Elected board members reported themselves to be very responsive to the needs of constituents regardless of how trivial or personal the needs may be (Interviews #4, 5, elected school board members). Issues arise and are carried forward by the contacted board member: "Elected school board members are in touch with the people. I think you'll find that because of elections, people feel more comfortable taking their concerns to their school board members" (Interview #5, elected school board member). Trivial issues may be resolved, in the view of the constituent and the board member, without ever being defined as a policy problem or an agenda item.

Often, however, the manner of resolution appears to provoke controversy between superintendent and school board member. Dealing with issues raised by constituents is often regarded as "helping the superintendent" by the school board member: "I'm in the schools on smaller issues--not like the budget or capital improvement--but issues about teacher-student interactions, you know, perceived injustice. Just things people want me to investigate (Interview #5, elected school board member). "They think they're helping me" (Superintendent #1, appointed board).

Day-to-day operations, Administration and Organization, may be the obvious route to appearing responsive to a constituency for an elected official, but it is also an area ripe for the concerns of an appointed member as well. Their motives, according to the interviews, spring from "concern for the children." However, intrusion into

administration is not restricted to those board members who serve an electorate. "It doesn't matter if a board member is elected or appointed if they don't buy into their role!" (Interview #1, superintendent of appointed board).

"Meddling" is not restricted to board type. A superintendent of an appointed board told the following anecdote: "At the opening of school, a board member came to our opening meeting--400 teachers. He left a note on the principal's desk that he noticed a teacher who did not say the pledge (to the flag) and asked that the teacher be spoken to. I had to tell him that you don't direct my principals to do anything" (Interview #1, superintendent of appointed board). When board members "meddle" in administration, superintendents report dealing with them quickly and directly. One superintendent of an elected board (superintendent interview #6) noted: "I hold workshops which basically define turf. I am not reluctant to do that or to tell them when they venture into my territory." Role definition and territorial definition require statement and restatement by the superintendent. Chance (1992) found that successful superintendents were the facilitators of organizational equilibrium.

Determining the institutional agenda is a task designated to the chairman of the school board and the superintendent, but sometimes board members will raise issues in session which are not on the agenda, another territorial encroachment. An issue may qualify to make it to the agenda by exhibiting three prerequisites: (a) widespread attention, (b) shared concern that some type of action is required, (c) a shared perception that the matter is an appropriate concern of some governmental issue and falls within the bounds of its authority (Cobb & Elder, 1983, p. 86). Maintaining control of the institutional agenda through control of the systemic agenda was reported by the three

superintendents of elected boards as a major time-consuming activity (Interviews # 4, 5, 6. superintendents).

Particularly when board members attempt to bring issues to the agenda which are not within the bounds of authority of the board, superintendents of both elected and appointed boards report personal behaviors intended to shape board members' attitudes through pre-decisional social processes. They deliver information, they define and redefine for board members their respective roles, they build coalitions, they persuade, scrutinize, challenge, and involve board members. Interview data indicated that superintendents of appointed boards work just as hard as superintendents of elected boards in pre-decisional social processes. "Board members are my full-time job" (Interview #1, superintendent of appointed board), and "I spend so much time on the phone with board members that my productivity has been affected" (Interview #2, superintendent of elected board).

Some superintendents have developed proactive strategies to prevent conflict. One superintendent of an appointed board (Interview #1) described how he handled a particularly problematic board member: "About a week before the board meeting, I create an issue and ask her to come in. It helps to defuse her. I deal with all her issues at the private meeting up front. I go over the agenda for the board meeting with her. She feels she has ownership in agenda setting" (Interview #1, superintendent of appointed board). In this case, the superintendent managed the agenda by attending to the school board member's need to be involved in the process. Perceiving the needs of board members and attending to them helps to reduce conflict and increase collaboration.

Superintendents of school boards are gate keepers of the systemic agenda. Their primary tools are information, communication, staff, history, time, and technical and professional expertise. In large school divisions, they have the advantage of resources in terms of other professionals and access to information. Superintendents of elected boards reported spending more time gathering requested information for board members and more time in pre-decisional social processes than they did as superintendents of appointed boards. The comment below is representative:

I spend a lot of time defining and redefining what is the purview of administration and what is the purview of policy. I have made a conscious effort to be more accepting of the board members' need for information and their need to be involved. I am spending a lot more time on individual board member issues than ever before. (Interview #4, superintendent, elected board)

Information is a critical tool of decision makers. Superintendents of elected boards reported adjusting to the informational needs of their board members, but superintendents of appointed boards also reported an increase in requests for information. A superintendent of an appointed board commented on the insatiable appetite for information held by his board members. After receiving from this superintendent all the information he had asked to have, a board member observed that now he had "enough information to be indecisive" (Interview #2, superintendent of appointed board).

The need for information for decision making has always existed. A change in the political climate may have enabled all school board members to request and expect to receive more information than they did previous to the ESB Referendum. The climate is

open and the expectation is clear: superintendents will deliver information as accurately and completely as possible. Lay boards want to make informed decisions. A superintendent's successfulness may well be correlated to his or her ability and willingness to communicate information (Chance, 1992).

Board members, whether elected or appointed, are not without their own tools. They have the power of a populace behind them. They establish coalitions and alignments on issues that the superintendent may or may not value. Within the board itself, they have the power of the vote in decision making. Ultimately, they have the power to fire the superintendent. The tools of the superintendent and the tools of the school board members are factors in the balance in the organization.

Balance in social, economic, and political exchange plays a part in school board politics that includes the broader community. In Blau's (1986) sociopolitical interpretive paradigm of the negotiated system, the concepts of negotiation and exchange are inherent in the process of playing out a role. In social exchanges, individual resources and available sanctions are the currency of the social bargaining.

A case in point comes from a town that rejected the ESB Referendum. "This town has a stable population. When the Referendum was placed before us, business rallied to the appointed boards. We showed people that if we elected school boards, we'd have to return to a ward system to assure minority representation. Nobody wanted to return to that" (Interview #2, appointed school board member). The implication that elected school boards would split the "stable" community along racial lines was an effective strategy because the community valued racial harmony and enjoyed minority representation on the appointed school board. The promise of the social exchange represented by the defeat



of the Referendum was, of course, that such representation would continue. Of additional note was the effectiveness of the business coalition in support of the status quo. Aside from social exchange, economic exchange may have been a covert sanction of the business coalition. Community values had a decisive effect on school board politics.

Two superintendents noted that teachers have gained power under elected school boards. In one division, a curriculum recommendation proposed by an assistant superintendent lost to an alternative recommendation proposed by teachers (Interview #5, superintendent of elected board). Superintendents view the power of teachers in simple social exchange terms: teachers provide a greater pool of votes, and votes translate to election (Interview #5, superintendent of elected board; Interview #2, superintendent of appointed board).

In another community that defeated the ESB Referendum, economic exchange became the critical election issue. This community, described by an appointed school board member as fairly homogeneous, used an economic argument to defeat ESB: "If we eventually elect a school board, it will cost taxpayers 10-20% to pay for services that we now share with the city" (Interview #3, appointed school board member). Whether the argument had merit or not is inconsequential; it appealed to a strongly held value within the community.

Another example of economic exchange was reported by two superintendents. In two school divisions, school board members voted themselves substantial raises. Subsequently, each superintendent noted increased involvement by the school board members in terms of committee work and reports to the board at large. "The more they get paid, the more time they commit" (Interview #10, superintendent of appointed board).

An appointed board in a third community had relatively low school board member involvement. They also received the minimum pay possible and each member returned the monthly check to the school division to support scholarships (Interview #3, superintendent of appointed board). School board members appeared to be sensitive to the perceptions the community held of them regardless of whether they were accountable to a constituency (elected) or served the children of the division (appointed).

Accountability was a common thread within the interviews. The prevailing perception was that appointed and elected board members are accountable to different groups. Elected board members are perceived as serving a constituency and perceive that their source of power is the electorate (Interviews #1, 2, 4, 5, superintendents; Interviews # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, school board members). Appointed school board members reported that they “serve the children” (Interviews # 4, 5). “Elected boards feel obligated to put their fingers in day to day operations. They have a much tighter relationship with the people whose doors they have actually knocked on. Most appointed board members felt an obligation to kids” (Interview #6, superintendent of elected board). Carter and Cunningham (1997) reported that board members are increasingly concerned with political constituents and with getting re-elected. The concern is that decisions may be driven more by political expedience rather than a desire for educational excellence.

Fragmentation within a board was frequently cited as a result of elections to school board positions. However, superintendents of both board types see themselves as negotiators and persuaders who must bring unity out of fragmentation that occurs on both elected and appointed boards: “I’m the glue that holds them together” (Interview #1, superintendent of appointed board). Superintendents must confront the issue of power

sources of school board members when that power source interferes with the ability of the school board to make policy for the general good. Diverse constituencies of elected boards are not the only source of fragmentation, however.

Sources of power can have an impact on appointed boards as well as elected boards. The issue of fragmentation also arose for a superintendent of an appointed board. In that locality, the appointment process was controlled by individual members of the Board of Supervisors resulting in appointments to the school board from particular geopolitical subdivisions of the school division. The result was fragmentation. Individual board members reflected on how particular policy under consideration would impact “their schools” rather than all the children. “You have a school board member that thinks they own that particular part of town. It creates fragmented loyalty and fragmented decision making. There are few issues that pull them together” (Interview #1, superintendent of appointed board). Inherent in this fragmentation is the same social exchange issue found on elected boards that are not elected at-large but by wards: accountability is to a specific constituency.

Appointed school board members make many assumptions about and are particularly critical of their elected counterparts: “. . . elected school boards are almost a personal agenda. Elected boards are harder to work with. Fragmented board members doom school reform to slow progress” (Interview #2, appointed school board member). Board members who have the perspective of having served on both types of boards do not hesitate to compare the boards: “Commitment has declined with elected. I listen at conferences and hear people talk about using school boards for other political aspirations” (Interview #4, elected school board member, previously appointed), and “Once boards

become elected, they feel more powerful and control the superintendent more and get in his stuff" (Interview #6, elected board member). A long-serving superintendent observed that "People serve to influence, to raise their visibility. Look at Congress--their first office was elected school board" (Interview, #2, superintendent of appointed board). Implicit in these comments are the values of unity, progress, humility, service, and efficiency along with the suspicion that election is a stepping stone that is self-serving and impedes progress.

Summary of discussion. Cultural change as a theory to explain greater involvement and responsibility for school leadership by elected school board members is not confirmed in this study. Elected and appointed school board members were found to be similarly involved in their school leadership roles. Survey data, although statistically significant, does not support a practical difference because of the narrow band in which all respondent groups fall. Interview data confirms the active role of appointed school board members.

Superintendents of both elected and appointed school boards reported spending more time with school board members and the issues they raise than they had previous to the ESB Referendum. The issues are often policy-related personal issues, points of information, and inquiries from the public. The issues fall in the area of Administration and Organization because day-to-day operations offer the greatest number of opportunities for issues to arise which impact on the greatest number of people in a personal way. Controversy arises when, in their zeal to solve constituents' problems, school board members encroach on administrative functions. Superintendents have been required to define and redefine roles for their school board members.

The agenda-building and exchange paradigms are useful for understanding the dynamics at work within Virginia's elected and appointed school divisions. The value placed on responsiveness and remaining in office are the currency of the elected school board member and his or her constituency. As a result, elected school boards are highly interactive. The survey data analysis and interviews supported the conclusion that superintendents of elected boards embrace a collaborative model.

The cultural change theory fails to account for the activity level of appointed school boards. Appointed school boards displayed both in the data on the issue area of Administration and Organization and in the interviews a high degree of involvement. In terms of exchange theory, increased involvement and visibility in the day-to-day operations of the schools may be the trade-off for remaining an appointed system. If constituents are satisfied by the degree of involvement of appointed school board members, they may not perceive a need for an elective system.

Superintendents of appointed divisions appear in the data to have a significant gap between themselves and their boards in the area of Administration and Organization. Interview data supported the conclusion that although superintendents of appointed divisions may feel that they ought to have greater control, in practical terms they have become very collaborative just as their colleagues have. Although the difference is statistically significant in the survey data, interview data reveals superintendents of appointed boards who regularly exercise pre-decisional social processes and collaborate with their school board members. Survey data findings have no practical meaning in this instance.

The proposed theories of cultural change and increased participation which served as the basis for this study (Schattschneider, 1975; Iannoccone & Lutz, 1970) were supported by the findings in the data and interviews that elected school board members would tend toward the "equally responsible" position in three of the four areas. Because the cultural change theory failed to account for the activity of appointed school board members, more dynamic explanatory models were sought. The sociopolitical models of agenda-setting (Cobb & Elder, 1983) and negotiation and exchange (Blau, 1986) provided more satisfactory explanations for the data revealed in the interviews. Additional non-theoretical explanations may be found in Virginia's confusion over curriculum at the state level and its laws concerning school funding.

Considering the nature of schooling, Curriculum and Instruction was an issue area in which the superintendent's technical expertise should have been dominant. However, it was the single issue area in which the superintendents preferred to give their boards greater control. The finding in the issue area of Curriculum and Instruction that both superintendents of elected and appointed boards prefer to give their boards greater control may be a factor of the recent political issues surrounding curriculum and instruction in Virginia. Outcome-Based Education, Elementary Guidance Counselors, Family-Life Education, Standards are all curriculum issues which have polarized boards and communities in the late 1980s and 1990s. Superintendents may well desire to allow their boards greater control in this highly visible and volatile area. It is equally apparent that boards would prefer that superintendents exercise professional dominance in this "hot button" issue.

Personnel issues, particularly employment of relatives and friends, often an issue causing great tension between the superintendent and the board (Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997; Grady & Bryant, 1991), do not appear to be a factor in Virginia. Interviewees did not relate any anecdotes and data did not support tension in this issue area.

Business and Financial Management, while not an issue of role perception, did become an obvious community value in two interviews. In the two localities that were surveyed that had rejected the ESB referendum, business values were employed as implied sanctions. In one city, businesses rallied to the cause of appointed school boards. In the other, financial analysis of the cost of becoming an elected school division was credited with defeating ESB. Since school boards in Virginia receive funding from the local governing body and do not have the power of taxation, issues related to raising funds to support schools are not a factor and therefore are removed from contention. Financial management is an area of conflict that has been documented in empirical studies in other states (Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997), but because of Virginia's school funding laws, controversy in this area is not high. Business issues represent values that are generally held.

### Conclusions

Although significant statistical differences were found to exist in the survey data for Administration and Organization for both position and board type, no real practical differences appear to exist. All unit means cluster between the "equally responsible" position (3) and the "superintendent primarily responsible" position (4). Real differences,

although statistically significant, are not great. Practical differences, as revealed in the interviews, appear to be few.

Both elected and appointed boards are very interactive within their communities on issues that are Administrative and Organizational in nature. Both elected and appointed board members occasionally cross the line into administrative territory, forcing their superintendents to address their differing roles and bring the organization back into its proper balance. Both boards present their superintendents with extensive requests for information. Both types of superintendents are spending more time providing information and engaging in pre-decisional social processes with individual board members to negotiate the systemic agenda. Given the degree of involvement of both elected and appointed school boards, the sociopolitical models of agenda-setting (Cobb & Elder, 1983) and negotiation and exchange (Blau, 1986) offer greater explanatory power than the proposed culture change component of Dissatisfaction Theory.

A recent study by the New England School Development Council and Educational Research Service (Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997) reported that superintendents' major frustrations centered on school boards involvement in issues of personnel and budget. These areas were not found to be particularly problematic in this Virginia study as indicated either in the data or through the interviews. However, it is important to note that Virginia's elected school boards are not mature. Administration and Organization as an issue area in which to prove responsiveness to the public may be purely an availability factor. As elected boards mature, laws concerning public school finance may change as part of the evolutionary process of school governance. Budget and personnel issues may then become as controversial as they are elsewhere.



A process theory of democracy was evident in the comments of superintendents. They see their role as living in the tension, as being part of the checks-and-balance system that enables the system to progress with all stakeholders having input. As gate keepers to the systemic agenda, they are spending time and energy in negotiating the agenda with their school board members. As Schattschneider (1975) and Iannoccone and Lutz (1970) predicted, increasing the scope of participation has increased conflict but conflict has not paralyzed any of the systems surveyed or interviewed.

Superintendents reported having adjusted their working styles to the new realities of participation. Real operational differences do not appear to exist between superintendents of elected boards and superintendents of appointed boards. Superintendents of appointed boards may have indicated on their surveys their perceptions of the way “things ought to be,” however, their behaviors as reported in the interviews reveal collaborative styles. “In today’s market, the superintendent has to operate more as a consultant than as a leader” (Interview #2, superintendent of appointed board). Virginia’s superintendents will serve themselves well to adopt a political-professional model of the superintendency.

### Recommendations

1. The findings of this study have implications for superintendents in Virginia as communities continue to change their method of school board selection to election. The role of the superintendent is changing from a professional/dominant interpretation to a political-professional orientation. A study of superintendent attitudes and position retention should be undertaken in elected school divisions beginning ten years after the adoption of the ESB Referendum. The 10 year time frame is recommended by researchers

who ascribe to the Dissatisfaction Theory (Flynn, 1984; Freeborn, 1966; Kitchens, 1994; Lutz & Iannoccone, 1986; Sullivan, 1990; Walden, 1966). It usually takes 7 to 10 years for demographic changes in the school district to give way to a successful insurgence on the school board with superintendent replacement following a turning-point-election within three years.

2. It is recommended that a future study compare role perceptions among elected divisions in urban, suburban, and rural communities to further determine the impact of diversity on school governance in Virginia.

3. Two communities that defeated the ESB Referendum were represented in the interviews and in the data collection. A qualitative study of the three communities that rejected the referendum would provide insight into the political process of school governance in those divisions.

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## Appendix A

### Survey of Virginia School Board Member and Superintendent Perceptions of Responsibility for School Leadership

**Survey of Virginia  
School Board Member  
and  
Superintendent  
Perceptions  
of Responsibility for Leadership**

**Part I: Identification Information**

1. Position: Superintendent\_\_\_\_ School Board member\_\_\_\_
2. Number of years in this position\_\_\_\_ If less than 1 year, number of months \_\_\_\_
3. Type of school board selection method currently used by the school division:  
Elected\_\_\_\_ Appointed\_\_\_\_
4. Does your board have seated members who are elected as well as appointed?  
\_\_Yes \_\_No
5. If elected board member, were you previously appointed? \_\_Yes \_\_No

**Part II. Leadership Responsibility**

DIRECTIONS: The questions in this survey are designed to determine the perceptions of superintendents and school board members regarding responsibilities within Virginia school divisions. Twenty-seven issues have been identified on which superintendents and school board members are expected to make decisions. For each issue, please indicate who, in your school system, actually decides on that issue. Please answer every question.

Any information provided will not identify the names of any school districts or individuals. An identification code will appear on the survey. Only the researcher will be able to match codes with names. This is for the purpose of providing follow-up mailings.

### EXAMPLE

Please indicate your response by circling either number 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

Ex. Determining class size

SCHOOL BOARD TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE	SCHOOL BOARD PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE	EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE	SUPERINTENDENT PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE	SUPERINTENDENT TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE
1	2	3	4	5

The circled answer in this example indicates that the respondent believes that the superintendent is primarily responsible, or has major, but not total responsibility for determining class size.

### SURVEY

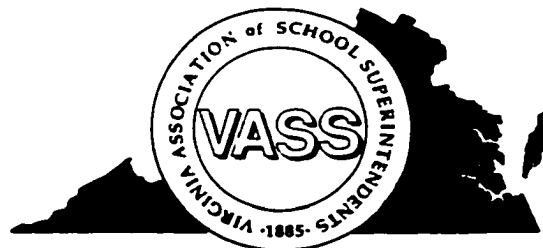
#### Issues

	SCHOOL BOARD TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE	SCHOOL BOARD PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE	EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE	SUPERINTENDENT PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE	SUPERINTENDENT TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE
1. Approving or rejecting a request from a specific nonschool group to use school facilities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Deciding how to invest \$100,000.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Hiring legal counsel.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Establishing line-item budgets	1	2	3	4	5
5. Determining the school division's salary scale.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Developing a district policy on weapons.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Talking to the press after a drug search on a high school campus.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Deciding which courses to cut from the curriculum to meet budget demands.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Selecting an assistant superintendent.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Selecting textbooks for use in the school district.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Authorizing specific expenditures from allocated funds.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Appointing people to serve on a citizen's advisory committee.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Determining what items will be included on the school board agenda.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Deciding which school building to close due to declining enrollment.	1	2	3	4	5

	SCHOOL BOARD TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE	SCHOOL BOARD PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE	EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE	SUPERINTENDENT PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE	SUPERINTENDENT TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE
15. Deciding the grade configuration of the division's schools.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Transferring a principal from one school to another in the division.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Awarding contracts to vendors.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Deciding which extracurricular activities the schools will offer.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Selecting a high school principal.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Determining individual school bus routes.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Promoting a teacher to the assistant principalship.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Transferring a student from one school to another within the division.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Firing the school division's budget director.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Deciding which staff members report directly to the school board.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Selecting a high school basketball coach.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Setting school attendance boundaries.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Deciding where to deposit school division funds.	1	2	3	4	5

***Thank you!***

**Appendix B**  
**Letters of Endorsement**



# VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION of SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

405 Emmet Street • Charlottesville, Virginia 22903 • (804) 924-0538 • Fax (804) 982-2942

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June 12, 1997

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Dear Division Superintendents,

Research directed toward improving the professional development of school superintendents is valuable to the Virginia Association of School Superintendents. I am requesting your support of Karen L. Kolet's research study of elected and appointed school boards. Karen, a doctoral student at The College of William and Mary, is conducting a survey for her dissertation titled "Role Perceptions of Elected and Appointed School Boards and Their Superintendents in Virginia".

Your assistance in this study will provide information to Virginia superintendents to be better prepared to meet the challenges of the job. Karen is committed to providing each of you with a summary of the research findings.

Sincerely,

Alfred R. Butler  
Executive Director

## STAFF

### Executive Director

*Alfred R. Butler, IV*

### Assistant Executive Director

*J. Andrew Stamp*

### Administrative Assistant

*Sandra D. Turner*

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**Virginia School Boards Association**  
*"Children Are Our Common Wealth"*

**2320-B Hunter's Way, Charlottesville, Virginia 22911-7931**

June 18, 1997

To: Selected School Board Members and Superintendents

From: Frank E. Barham, Executive Director 

Ms. Karen L. Kolet, a graduate student at the College of William and Mary, is conducting a study of role perceptions of school board members and superintendents. The Virginia School Boards Association can attest to the fact that a proper understanding of roles and responsibilities is essential to an effective working relationship between the school board and the superintendent, and we believe that Ms. Kolet's survey may provide valuable insights and information.

I hope that you will take the time to complete this questionnaire and assist in this important survey. Thank you in advance for your participation.



## Appendix C

### Correspondence Accompanying Surveys

Letterhead—New Horizons Regional Education Center  
Superintendents' letter

Date

Dear

You have been selected to play a key part in a research study of Virginia school board member and superintendent roles. The relationship between school board members and the superintendent is critical to the process of school governance. We know that when conflict arises between boards and superintendents, perception of respective roles usually is at the root of the problem. Research has been done regarding the roles of superintendents and school board members as well as the role perceptions of elected boards and appointed boards, but role perceptions of Virginia boards and superintendents have not been studied. Your completion of the enclosed survey will assist me in identifying role perceptions of Virginia superintendents, elected school board members, and appointed school board members. This study, which is supported by VASS, should result in a better understanding of the factors that affect the working relationships of superintendents and school boards in Virginia.

Please take approximately 15 minutes to complete all items included on the enclosed survey. Your confidentiality is assured. No one individual or school division will be identified. All data will be aggregated by membership group: superintendents of elected boards, superintendents of appointed boards, appointed school board members, elected school board members. The code that appears on the survey is solely for the purpose of conducting follow-up mailings. You may be asked to participate in a confidential discussion of the survey results after they have been analyzed.

No risks, discomforts, or stresses are foreseen. If you have any questions regarding the survey or the study, please contact me at (757) 868-7049 (home), or (757) 874-4444 (office) or contact either of my co-chairs: Dr. James Stronge (757) 221-2339 (office) or Dr. Robert Hanny (757) 221-2334 (office).

Please complete the survey and return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope by September 10, 1997. I will send you a summary of the results of the study. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Kolet

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. James Stronge, College of William and Mary

Dr. Robert Hanny, College of William and Mary

Dr. David Leslie, College of William and Mary

Letterhead-New Horizons Regional Education Center

school board members' letter

Date

Dear

You have been selected to play a key part in a research study of Virginia school board member and superintendent roles. The relationship between school board members and the superintendent is critical to the process of school governance. We know that when conflict arises between boards and superintendents, perception of respective roles usually is at the root of the problem. Research has been done regarding the roles of superintendents and school board members as well as the role perceptions of elected boards and appointed boards, but role perceptions of Virginia boards and superintendents have not been studied. Your completion of the enclosed survey will assist me in identifying role perceptions of Virginia superintendents, elected school board members, and appointed school board members. This study, which is supported by VSBA, should result in a better understanding of the factors that affect the working relationships of superintendents and school boards in Virginia.

Please take approximately 15 minutes to complete all items included on the enclosed survey. Your confidentiality is assured. No one individual or school division will be identified. All data will be aggregated by membership group: superintendents of elected boards, superintendents of appointed boards, appointed school board members, elected school board members. The code that appears on the survey is solely for the purpose of conducting follow-up mailings. You may be asked to participate in a confidential discussion of the survey results after they have been analyzed.

No risks, discomforts, or stresses are foreseen. If you have any questions regarding the survey or the study, please contact me at (757) 868-7049 (home), or (757) 874-4444 (office) or contact either of my co-chairs: Dr. James Stronge (757) 221-2339 (office) or Dr. Robert Hanny (757) 221-2334 (office).

Please complete the survey and return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope by September 10, 1997. I will send a summary of the results of the study to your school division in care of your superintendent. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Kolet

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. James Stronge, College of William and Mary

Dr. Robert Hanny, College of William and Mary

Dr. David Leslie, College of William and Mary

**Appendix D**  
**Postcard Reminder**

Sept. 10, 1997

Hello!

In August, you received a survey concerning perception of responsibility for leadership among Virginia's superintendents and school board members. Your opinions are very important. I look forward to receiving your survey soon. If the survey and this reminder have crossed in the mail, please disregard this note. If you have mislaid the survey, I will send another. If you need one, please call me at (757) 874-4444 (school) or reach me by e-mail: [kolet@www.wl.nhgs.tec.va.us](mailto:kolet@www.wl.nhgs.tec.va.us). Thank you for participating in my research!

Karen Kolet